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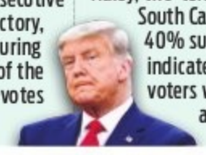
TRUMP INCHES CLOSER TO REPUBLICAN NOMINATION

Donald Trump defeated Nikki Haley in South Carolina primary, his fourth consecutive victory, securing 60% of the votes

Haley said she is not quitting the race and taking the fight to Super Tuesday—March 5—when Republican voters in 15 states and one territory will vote

Haley, two-term governor in South Carolina, said the 40% support for her indicates that Republican voters want an alternative | P11



HALEY IGNORED IN VICTORY SPEECH

- Trump celebrated his victory in Columbia, South Carolina and told his supporters, "There's never been a spirit like this, and I just want to say that. I have never seen the Republican Party so unified."
- Earlier, Trump won Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and the US Virgin Islands

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▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM
▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Goods train runs 70 km without driver

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

A diesel engine-powered goods train ran for 70 km without a driver at top speed from Kathua in Jammu, crossing five stations on its way before it came to a halt near Unchi Bassi station in Punjab.

An official said no casualty or damage to property was reported. Divisional Traffic Manager, Jammu, Prateek Srivastava said that an inquiry has been initiated to know the cause of the incident.

Prima facie, it seems that the train started rolling down the slope-gradient track towards Punjab without the driver and his assistant.

"The train came to a halt near Unchi Bassi station due to steep-gradient track, after covering a distance of 70 km," he added. It was halted with the assistance of sandbags, sources said.

The 53-wagon train loaded with chip stones had stopped at Kathua for driver change. Sources said the hand brakes were not applied and the train started moving. The engine cabin was not secured fully—one side was powered off while the other side was running. The train gained speed and crossed a few stations before finally coming to a stop because of steep-gradient track.

Meanwhile, when the train was hurtling through the tracks, a message was sent to all gatemen to keep the level-crossings closed.

PM OPENS 5 AIIMS, ACCUSES PREVIOUS GOVTS OF NEGLECT

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated five new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and laid the foundation stone of development projects worth ₹48,100 crore.

The projects, unveiled at an event at Rajkot in Gujarat, encompass health, road, rail, energy, petroleum & natural gas, and tourism sectors. These include around 200 healthcare infrastructure projects worth ₹11,500 crore spread across 23 states and Union Territories, a PMO release said.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the five AIIMS in Rajkot, Bathinda (Punjab), Raebareli (Uttar Pradesh), Kalyani (West Bengal), and Mangalagiri (Andhra Pradesh), Modi said his government takes the country's development seriously and executes projects fast.

The five AIIMS were built at a cost of ₹6,315.23 crore. Among the other major projects the PM dedicated to the nation are the new Mundra-Panipat pipeline project worth ₹9,000 crore and 21 projects of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation worth ₹2,280 crore.

Targeting the Congress, Modi said the grand old party was in power for several decades but its development track record is poor. "For 50 years after Independence, there was only one AIIMS, and that too in Delhi. In the seven decades since Independence, only seven AIIMS were approved but even these were never completed."

Modi claimed his government inaugurated seven new AIIMS in just 10 days. "That's why I am saying we are developing the country many times faster than what happened in the last six to seven decades and are dedicating it at the feet of the citizens," he said, adding that his government approved 10 AIIMS in the last 10 years.

PM Narendra Modi offers prayers at the underwater site in the Arabian Sea, where the ancient city of Dwarka is believed to have existed, on Sunday | PTI

The PM also inaugurated the 2.32-km-long Sudarshan Setu, India's longest cable-stayed bridge connecting Beyt Dwarka island to mainland Okha in Devbhumi Dwarka district.

UK prof to attend Statute meet stopped at KIA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

INDIAN-origin writer, poet and activist Prof Nitasha Kaul, who was invited to 'The Constitution and Unity of India' conference organised by the Karnataka government, has alleged that she was denied entry to India by immigration officials at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on Friday. She took to social media platform X on Sunday to share her ordeal and said that after she was detained at the airport in a holding cell for 24 hours, she was deported to London.

Kaul alleged that the immigration officials in Bengaluru informally made references to her criticism of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for refusing her entry into India to take part in the conference that was held at Palace Grounds on Saturday and Sunday.

"I was invited to a conference by the Government of Karnataka (Congress-ruled state) but Centre refused me entry. All my documents were valid and current (UK passport and Overseas Citizen of India). I was given no reason by immigration except 'we cannot do anything, orders from Delhi'. My travel and logistics had been arranged by Karnataka and I had the official letter with me. I received no notice or info in advance from Delhi that I would not be allowed to enter," Kaul said in a series of her posts.

Prof Nitasha Kaul at Kempegowda International Airport after she was detained by immigration officials

She said she is a globally respected academic and public intellectual and added, "I am not anti-Indian, I am anti-authoritarian and pro-democracy."

"The government is welcome to fix this and speak to me so that I can explain what is that they are unable to understand about me, my identity, my work or my views. Generations of my family have served important institutions of the state and government and such petty vindictive behaviour is incredible," Kaul stated. P4

BITCOIN SCAM

Offered free pass by police: Shriki told GF in email when in custody

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

"MY time in police custody is one of the most amazing experiences. I have been offered a free pass by the police... Becoming friends with all the top cops, I got a laptop, music, Zazz-tab whatever I needed and being monitored by the commissioner himself..."

This was the content of an e-mail sent by notorious hacker **Shrikrishna alias Shriki**, the main accused in the Bitcoin scam, from his personal email ID to his girlfriend on February 22, 2021, when he was in police custody. The mail was recovered by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), probing the multi-crore Bitcoin scam. The SIT is using the mail to substantiate the alleged nexus between the accused police officers and Shriki.

Objecting to this revelation, the counsel for police inspector Prashanth Babu CM, who was part of the investigation team constituted to probe the Bitcoin scam earlier, pointed out that on the said date, Shriki was not in police custody as per complaint.

The SIT is using the email as the basis to seek dismissal of Babu's bail petition and to show how Shriki and another accused Robin Khandelwal were used to hack crypto wallets, websites, gaming apps, etc. to make illegal gains by detaining them illegally.

The counsel further contended before a city civil and sessions court, where the plea was filed, that several Bitcoins were illegally transferred on January 16, 2021, but on that date Shriki was not in police custody. The allegation of illegal detention of Shriki and Robin has been made three years after their detention. CONTINUED ON: P3

EXPRESS READ

Cong MLA Naik dies at 67, session extended

Bengaluru: Sitting Congress MLA from Shorapura Assembly constituency in Yadgir district, **Raja Venakatappa Naik**, passed away due to a heart attack at a private hospital here on Sunday. He was 67 years old. The legislature session, which was to conclude on Monday, has been postponed to Wednesday as the houses will pay tribute to Naik | P4

Woman killed, body found chopped in drum

Bengaluru: The body of an elderly woman was found chopped into five pieces and dumped in a plastic drum in KR Puram on Sunday. Police said Susheelamma's arms and legs were precisely severed | P3

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Monday: 26/02/2024 • Year: Shobhakruta • Ayana: Uttharayana • Ritu: Sishira • Masa: Magha • Paksha: Krishna • Tithi: Dwitheeya 9.05 pm • Nakshatra: Uttara Phalguni 2.38 pm • Moon in Kanya Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am • Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 17°C | MAX 32°C
FORECAST: Afternoon clouds

Sunrise 06.37 am | Sunset 06.27 pm | Moonrise 07.57 pm | Moonset 07.42 am

WE'RE AT MERCY OF PVT WATER TANKERS, REGULATE THEM, FUME THIRSTY RESIDENTS

Rates up from ₹700 to ₹3,000; Crisis to be tackled after commissioning of Cauvery Stage V: Official

AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

WHILE the coordination meeting of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) ended by chalking out plans to tide over the water crisis this summer, residents fume as no decision was taken on regulating private water tankers. Residents say that they are at the mercy of water tankers and they are being fleeced. They complain that the price of water has gone up and in areas like Rajarajeshwari Nagar, even though the citizens are willing to shell out extra, the waiting time for the tanker is more than three days.

Prakash Murugan, a resident of Rajarajeshwari Nagar, said: "Our borewell is more than 1,000 ft in depth and has gone dry. While we have a Cauvery water connection, the supply is erratic and for a long time we and our company labourers have been depending on private water tankers."

Murugan said that for a 6,000-litre capacity water tanker, they paid Rs 400 last year. "Early this year, the water supplier hiked it to Rs 700. From the past few weeks, the cost of the same tanker has crossed Rs 2,000 and that too with a waiting period of more than three days. If we have to get water immediately, then the cost is Rs 3,000 per tanker," he lamented.

The situation is similar in many parts of the city, especially in the areas falling under east Bengaluru and the 110 villages that were taken under the ambit of BBMP.

"Officials say that they have plans to supply water to the areas facing water crisis. But in all these years, we have hardly seen BWSSB supplying water during summer. We are at the mercy of the private tankers who have hiked the rates based on the demand" said a resident of Mahadevapura.

"Once the Cauvery Stage V is commissioned, the majority of the water crisis in Bengaluru will be taken care of. We are hopeful of supplying Cauvery water to the parched parts of the city in May," a BWSSB official said.

> While we have Cauvery water connection, the supply is erratic and for a long time we and our company labourers have been depending on private water tankers
>
> Resident

Trans urge state govt to give them free higher edu

PURAN CHOUDHARY @Bengaluru

THE Tamil Nadu government during its recently released budget allocation announced that it will cover all educational expenses of transgender students who are willing to enrol into higher education courses. The announcement raised questions by the community in Karnataka who urged the government time and again to introduce policies that will help them live their lives in dignity.

A spokesperson from the community also argued that Karnataka should form a 'Transgender Welfare Board,' considering that it is the need of the hour for their holistic welfare and if neighbouring states can do it Karnataka can form on too. The TN government will allocate Rs 2 crore for the Welfare Board and cover educational expenses such as tuition and hostel fees for transgender individuals.

Sana Shree, founder of Swatantra, a trans rights organisation said that on a regular basis she meets many individuals who want to pursue their higher education and pick up a mainstream job. However, through her foundation, she can help only a handful of people.

"The one per cent reservation in Bangalore University (BU) is not enough, the government should formally help the community enter the mainstream, like how Tamil Nadu has taken full responsibility for the transgenders. Reservation in the educational sector should be seen as a fundamental right for the third gender," Sana advocated. She added that she would also like to pursue her higher education but there are fewer options to do so.

Besides, members of the community are displeased with the government hiking the Maitri pension by a mere Rs 400, from Rs 800. "We have to go to colleges and justify our identities to enrol into courses. With such a small amount, how can we meet all our expenses," a transgender added.

Akkai Padmashali, a transgender rights activist said that this year's Karnataka budget had almost nothing for the community. "The budget was not very favourable, our demands have been constantly ignored. Despite the cabinet approval of the Transgender Welfare Board in 2017 during the Siddaramaiah government, this year we were expecting some new resolutions."

Another trans activist and treasurer of Ondede NGO said they have recommended the government to introduce chapters on transgenders in school education and offer free education. "We recently met Primary Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa with a list of recommendations for education inclusion of the community. He assured us that necessary steps will be taken," said Rakshitha, treasurer of the NGO.

She added that though some private universities in the state have come forward, to provide scholarships for transgenders, the number is less and needs government intervention.

SATS entry verification underway in PU colleges

ENS @Udupi

ON the lines of CBSE, Karnataka took a decision to allot 20 internal marks for PUC exams in non-practical subjects from the academic year 2023-24. From this year, based on the instructions from the Department of Pre-University Education, committees comprising of a principal and two lecturers are being formed at the district level.

Sources in the department stated that these committees have started visiting PU colleges to check whether assignments for project work have been completed by students and if internal marks have been allotted by lecturers. Marks obtained by the students in the internal assessments have been uploaded on the Student Achievement Tracking System (SATS), while PU Department officials, through the committee, want to confirm whether justice has been done. Sources said the drive is also to ensure that evaluators at the colleges do not overrate the students by giving marks liberally. During the inspection drive, committee members have been randomly checking answer scripts of students and the marks of the respective students entered in SATS. Udupi DDPU Maruthi told TNIE that the committee engaged in the inspection work will mainly check whether internal assessment marks have been entered in the SATS as this is the first academic year where question papers with changed pattern are being introduced.

The MEI road that connects to Kanteerava Studio Road | EXPRESS

100 potholes! Motorists rue condition of Kanteerava Studio Rd

MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

RESIDENTS of areas in and around Jalahalli claim that there are close to 100 potholes on Kanteerava Studio Road, a 1.2 km stretch road, posing a danger to motorists and pedestrians.

According to Anil Kumar, a resident, the road is also dusty owing to the potholes. "During peak hours, the road is dusty... motorists find it difficult to drive navigating the potholes. I have raised several complaints with the officials concerned, but the condition of the road remains the same," Anil Kumar, a retired engineer, rues.

Kanteerava Studio Road connects the busy Tumakuru Road to RMC Yard, Yeshwanthpur, Mahalaxmi Layout, Nandini Layout, Laggere, Rajgopala Nagar, and Peenya II Stage.

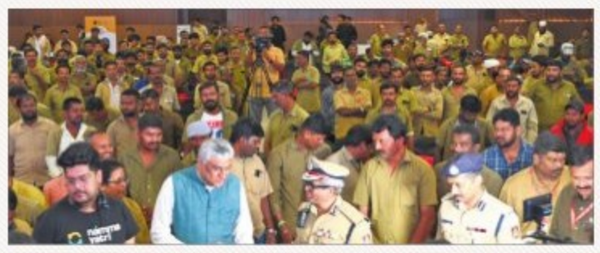
Accepting the presence of potholes and complaints from the residents, a senior Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) engineer says that the civic body is planning to white-top the roads in the locality, and the potholes are frequently covered. "However, for the last few weeks, this has not happened as BBMP Traffic Engineering Cell has not released any wet or hot bitumen mix to fix the roads," the engineer said.

A senior BBMP official said that as the palike is taking up white-topping work, the officials at the Traffic Engineering Cell have been told not to manufacture wet and hot mix in large quantities as it will be a waste of money.

BS Prahallad, Engineer-In-Chief, BBMP said, "What residents are saying about the stretch is true. It is not just about potholes... there is no well-tarred road. This is because of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). They dug up the road for pipework and did not restore the road. The road always sinks, and as a result, the condition of the road has become bad. Now, BBMP will white-top the 1.2 km stretch. The work will begin from the first week of March and will be completed at the earliest," said Prahallad.

Namma Yatri pledges to uphold safety, customer service standards

Bengaluru: Drivers of Namma Yatri, took a pledge to uphold safety and customer service standards here on Sunday. At an event titled 'Namma Sarathi Sangama,' Namma Yatri, in partnership with Bengaluru City Police, brought together top 500 drivers to improve the city's mobility where drivers recited the pledge, "Namma Auto, Super-Safety; Sakath-Service, Namma Duty" affirming their commitment to providing exceptional service and ensuring customer safety. Namma Yatri showcased its key features like --- a one-click SOS button, customer-triggered safety tracking, seamless integration with police control centres, and a 24x7 dedicated safety team. Additionally, night-time safety checks have been introduced to ensure passenger security. City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said, "Namma Sarathi Sangama signifies our shared commitment to honour and empower these drivers, thereby improving safety and convenience for citizens in the city."



Wipro earthian Awards '23 presented

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WIPRO Limited on Saturday held the 13th edition of Wipro earthian Awards for the year 2023. The awards are a culmination of an annual programme aimed at fostering integrated sustainability education and acknowledging Indian schools and colleges that actively promote sustainable action and thinking.

Wipro earthian, a sustainability education programme for schools and colleges, received over 1,200 project submissions, of which 22 winning and 18 shortlisted entries were selected by an independent jury. The teams from the winning schools demonstrated a deep understanding of biodiversity, waste and water. The event was held at Wipro Limited, Sarjapur Road campus. This year, the Wipro earthian in partnership with IIT Madras, launched the 'Ideas to Impact' challenge for college students in October 2023. It received more than 1,000 entries, of which 20 teams were shortlisted for the next round.

The contest offers comprehensive training, mentorship support and a prototype development fund of up to Rs 50,000 for the top 20 teams. The top teams will be selected for their most innovative ideas around the themes–air, water, energy, soil and material. The winning teams will receive a prize of Rs 1,00,000 and earn a direct entry to the interview round of Carbon Zero Challenge 5.0 – the all-India eco-innovation and entrepreneurship contest initiated by IIT Madras.

Winners of the Wipro earthian Awards 2023 in Bengaluru on Saturday | EXPRESS

EXPRESS READ

Rare disease awareness run held

Bengaluru: The Organisation for Rare Diseases India (ORDI) organized the 9th edition of Racefor7, the annual flagship event that took place across 15 cities in India on Sunday. The 7-kilometer marathon aimed to enhance awareness about rare diseases. Over 9,000 people participated in the run which commenced at 7am from the St Joseph's Indian High School ground in Ashok Nagar. It was flagged off by Kannada actor, Ramesh Aravind. Large groups of people gathered together for the noble cause under the theme 'One Nation, One Day – Together for Rare.' The awareness run symbolized 7,000 rare diseases, 70 lakh patients in India, and an average diagnostic journey of 7 years.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

26TH February: I am going to take a look at a number of planets this week. To start with, Venus: the Chinese call it the Metal Planet on account of its silvery whiteness, and associated it with weapons, war and the military. A Chinese astrologer would look at Venus' currently strong position and say, 'it's not a bad time for an argument'!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
You cannot help but ring the changes in the romantic arena. What you need in terms of affection, and who you want it from, will be different now from what it was this time last year. Remember that other people may not yet be ready to come up with the goods.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
You should say what needs to be said now, while you still have time. This is not to say that if you leave it till the end of the week it will be too late, only that right now you don't actually have to know what you're talking about, which is rather convenient!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
A snap decision may be vital if you are to take full advantage of prosperous financial possibilities. The relevant celestial influences overlap very briefly, so your sense of timing will have to be impeccable if you are to snap up a bargain. Stick to your high standards, though.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
If charm is called for, don't sit on the fence while life passes you by. Get out there now, smile sweetly, bat your eyelids and make sure that other people give in to your every whim. If there's any one rule in astrology this week, it's that the higher your hopes, the richer your achievements.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
It's strange the way the planets gradually assemble for the great celestial performances of the year. Right now, Venus, planet of love, a major player on the cosmic stage, is about to intervene in your affairs in a big way. It could even bring a very interesting new person into your life.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Both personal and joint financial issues are relatively free from astro-logical pressures at the moment, at least as far as your solar chart is concerned. One reading of this situation is that you may reshape and redirect your investments, savings and income for the better.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
There are increasing signs of social stress. This is not a bad thing, I hasten to add, for the planets are perfectly placed to give that additional determination you need to get your own way. Or, do you really want to do your best for others? If so, get on with it!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
It's difficult to make precise delineations of your sign at the moment, because while most of you are still being wound up like a coiled spring, others are just about to explode. Exciting times indeed! All the stars ask is that you avoid unnecessary risks.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
If you acknowledge that partners have the advantage, you will avoid the temptation to try and take over - and will steer clear of a minor humiliation. Far better to get on with your own personal affairs in the knowledge that, with the right degree of co-operation, this could be a marvellous time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
If you have been storing your feelings up, please relax and tell someone exactly how you feel about them. I know you are naturally reserved, but you must understand that you are in danger of letting a golden opportunity slip by. Keep an eye open for passing offers.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
If new routines or methods are to be discussed, you may find that the personal situation becomes rather complicated. The problem probably lies with other people, who are constantly adjusting their opinions. But, then, it's your responsibility to keep up, isn't it?

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
In many ways this is an ideal day for reflection. You are going through quite a puritanical phase, though naturally in your own utterly unique manner. The point is that you feel a need to be true to your spiritual ideals. That's not always easy, but at least you can try your best.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

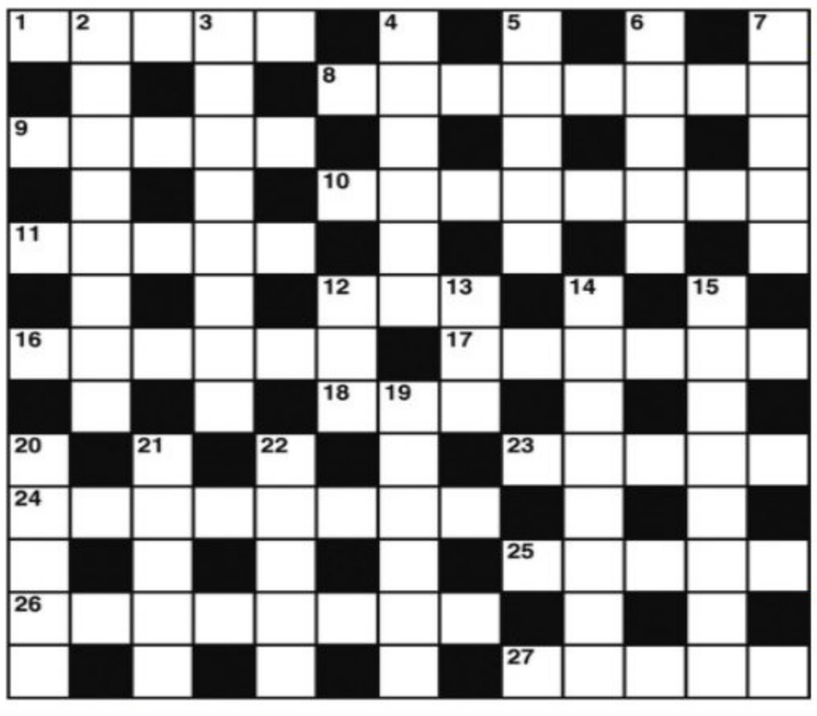
	3		6		1			
		9				4		
		1		3			5	
9		2		4	8			5
3			7	5		6		4
	9			1		5		
		7				9		
			3		4		2	

3	5	7	6	2	9	4	1	8
4	8	1	5	7	3	9	6	2
2	9	6	1	8	4	3	7	5
9	1	5	2	6	7	8	4	3
6	4	3	9	1	8	5	2	7
7	2	8	3	4	5	6	9	1
5	7	4	8	9	2	1	3	6
8	6	2	4	3	1	7	5	9
1	3	9	7	5	6	2	8	4

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Vital statistical centre (5)
8 Revealing story of Swiss resistance? (8)
9 See eye-to-eye with board (3,2)
10 Appropriate point to consider when renting premises (8)
11 Switch gear? (5)
12 Main part of the horse artillery (3)
16 Successfully retired? (6)
17 Cleaner air can't be found here (6)
18 Variety of pea that's a good climber (3)
23 Possibly beat a retreat (5)
24 An admission to charm one (8)
25 Becomes friendly towards Western members (5)
26 I'm retiring into an easily managed residence (8)
27 Love to have a party again (5)

DOWN
2 Nymph with broken heart goes to America (8)
3 Possible secret of not having to pay (4-4)
4 Ridicule made clear in a letter (6)
5 Condemn building material (5)
6 Nancy turns out to be shrewd (5)
7 Erato for example holds head of European flower (5)
12 Suitable resort for a spring holiday? (3)
13 Leave the French out of the welcome (3)
14 Non-union labour Shakespeare put to the sword (8)
15 Habitual shopper? (8)
19 Jam, strange as it may seem (6)
20 Good players make bloomers (5)
21 Little things to put in a manuscript (5)
22 Hurried to church from the stock farm (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Permission, 6 Cuff, 10 Refit, 11 Piecemeal, 12 Usurpers, 13 Ridge, 15 Actions, 17 Appoint, 19 Nephews, 21 Rotator, 22 Night, 24 Rest-cure, 27 Attempted, 28 All-in, 29 Long, 30 Thé dansant.

Down: 1 Peru, 2 Refuse tip, 3 Inter, 4 Suppers, 5 Open sea, 7 Upend, 8 False start, 9 Decrepit, 14 Cannonball, 16 Overtime, 18 Inter alia, 20 Scratch, 21 Resided, 23 Get on, 25 Chain, 26 Knot.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

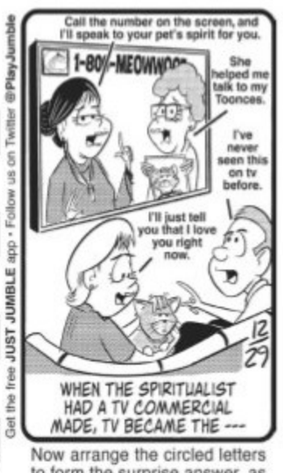
BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

MYMUM

TISEU

MSRUEM

DILMED


Call the number on the screen, and I'll speak to your pet's spirit for you.
1-80?-MEOWWOO
She helped me talk to my Toonces.
I've never seen this on tv before.
I'll just tell you that I love you right now.
WHEN THE SPIRITUALIST HAD A TV COMMERCIAL MADE, TV BECAME THE ---
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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: GOING HOIST DENOTE ENCORE
Answer: Everything done by the 14th letter of the alphabet was done — TO THE NTH DEGREE

A 13-year-old boy, who was playing on a swing, died when the rope wrapped around his neck, asphyxiating him. The incident happened at Savalanga village of Nyamathi taluk in Davanagere district. The deceased has been identified as Kotturesh, a Class 7 student

Case of fence eating crop, material against cops in Bitcoin scam: Court

Grants bail to police inspector with conditions, rejects advance bail plea of DySP

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

NOTING it to be a case of the fence eating the crop, the LI Additional City Civil and Sessions Court observed that police inspector Prashanth Babu DM, who was an investigation officer, used his powers to conduct illegal deeds, like illegal detention of the accused persons (hacker Shriki and Robin Khandelwal) and hacking crypto wallets, websites, gaming apps, etc, to make an illegal gain.

"... There are prima facie materials regarding the illegal detention of the accused persons in the earlier case and the act of hacking by using them with the help of Accused No. 1 (Shriki). The petitioner being a police officer and IO, the act is all the more serious," Judge Yashawanth Kumar said on Friday, while granting bail to Prashanth Babu, who was in judicial custody from January 25, 2024.

Special Public Prosecutor BN Jagadeesh argued that there is no bar for registering an FIR without sanction. Despite several requests, the hard disc and laptop used to commit the offence have not been made available to the investigating officer. It is a case of financial fraud. The investigation is not completed. If bail is granted, it will cause serious hindrance to the investigation, he argued. Babu pleaded through his advocate that he is cooperating with the investigation and he will undertake not to tamper with prosecution witnesses and evidence. He appealed to the court to grant him bail, saying he suffers from health issues and requires frequent medication. Bail was granted with conditions.

Refuting allegations against him, KA Santhosh Kumar, CEO of GCID Technologies, contended that he has been rendering his service to the state and assisted in more than 540 criminal cases. He is a man of honesty and integrity, otherwise, he would have not been engaged by the Karnataka state police in so many cases as an expert, his advocate claimed.

The judge noted that it appears that there are prima facie materials regarding hacking and transferring of Bitcoins, changing of passwords etc., with the help of this petitioner. However, bail was granted with conditions.

Objecting to anticipatory bail to Sridhar K Pujar, DSP, Internal Security Division, SPP BN Jagadeesh argued that Pujar joined hands with other accused and attempted to hack various currency wallets, payment gateways and stock exchange websites. Pujar allowed Santhosh Kumar to take control of the crypto wallet, email ID and bank accounts of Robin Kandelwal and changed the password. He manipulated the evidence and hence custodial interrogation is required, he argued.

Rejecting the bail plea, the judge said the petitioner cannot avoid custodial interrogation.

'PROBE TEAM COULD HAVE APPROACHED GOVT EXPERTS'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE allegation against inspector Babu, who assisted in the investigation but was not an investigator, was that he took Shriki and Robin to GCID Technologies Private Limited, a software firm. But that was only to facilitate the investigation, he argued. In counter, Special Public Prosecutor BN Jagadeesh argued that Babu could not have gone to GCID for investigation. The investigation team could have approached experts in the CID or Forensic Science Laboratory, which was pressed by the high court in an order.

Chopped up body of elderly woman found in drum

Bengaluru: An elderly woman's body, chopped into five pieces, was found stuffed inside a plastic drum in KR Puram police station limits on Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Susheelamma (65). Around 5 pm, locals inspected the drum to check on the foul odour emanating from it. While the upper body was intact, the arms and legs were precisely severed, police said. Police sources suspect that the woman was murdered between Saturday evening and midnight. Susheelamma was last seen by her daughter on Saturday morning at their house in Nisarga Layout. Police investigation revealed that Susheelamma had a habit of leaving home without informing her family and returning after some time. When she disappeared on Saturday, her family assumed it was one of her typical disappearances."We have interrogated the family members, but no conclusions can be drawn at this point," a senior police officer said. The KR Puram police have registered a case. **ENS**

Probe into Oz resident kidnap leads to arrest of drug peddler

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE kidnap case of a 50-year-old Australian resident resulted in the police arresting not only the six miscreants who orchestrated the kidnap but also a drug peddler.

The police said that the accused have been identified as Monesh, Lokesh, Kishore, Ravi, Dileep, and Satish, all residents of Parappana Agrahara, aged between 19 and 25.

Monesh, a tattoo artist, and the mastermind behind the crime, crossed paths with the victim, Rana, during the latter's visit to Bengaluru to see his brother, Aman Rana, a resident of JP Nagar, the police said. Rana, allegedly a drug addict, connected with Monesh through a dark website to seek ganja. Monesh then allegedly instructed Rana to meet near Bommasandra Circle, where he provided him with the drugs, the police added.

Subsequently, within a period of fewer than two weeks, Rana reached out to Monesh five times to procure drugs. After knowing about Rana's wealth, Monesh and his friends planned Rana's kidnap to extort money, the police said.

On February 5, when Rana went to Bommasandra Circle to get the drugs, Monesh asked him to come near their car and allegedly took him to Kishore's residence in Bommasandra. The accused then tied him and asked him to transfer money amounting to Rs 1.28 lakh into two different accounts. After a while, Rana escaped following which the accused contacted Rana's brother, Aman, and asked him for a ransom of Rs 40,000, the police added. Till February 20, Rana did not file a police complaint.

Rana holds an Australian citizenship and has retired recently. Around late January, Rana had come to Bengaluru to see his brother who is a businessman.

During interrogation, Monesh revealed that he had been receiving the drugs from a Bihar-based man, Satyanarayan, following which police raided his residence in Tilak Nagar and seized 410 gm of ganja. The police have arrested Satyanarayan and are currently investigating the case involving kidnap.

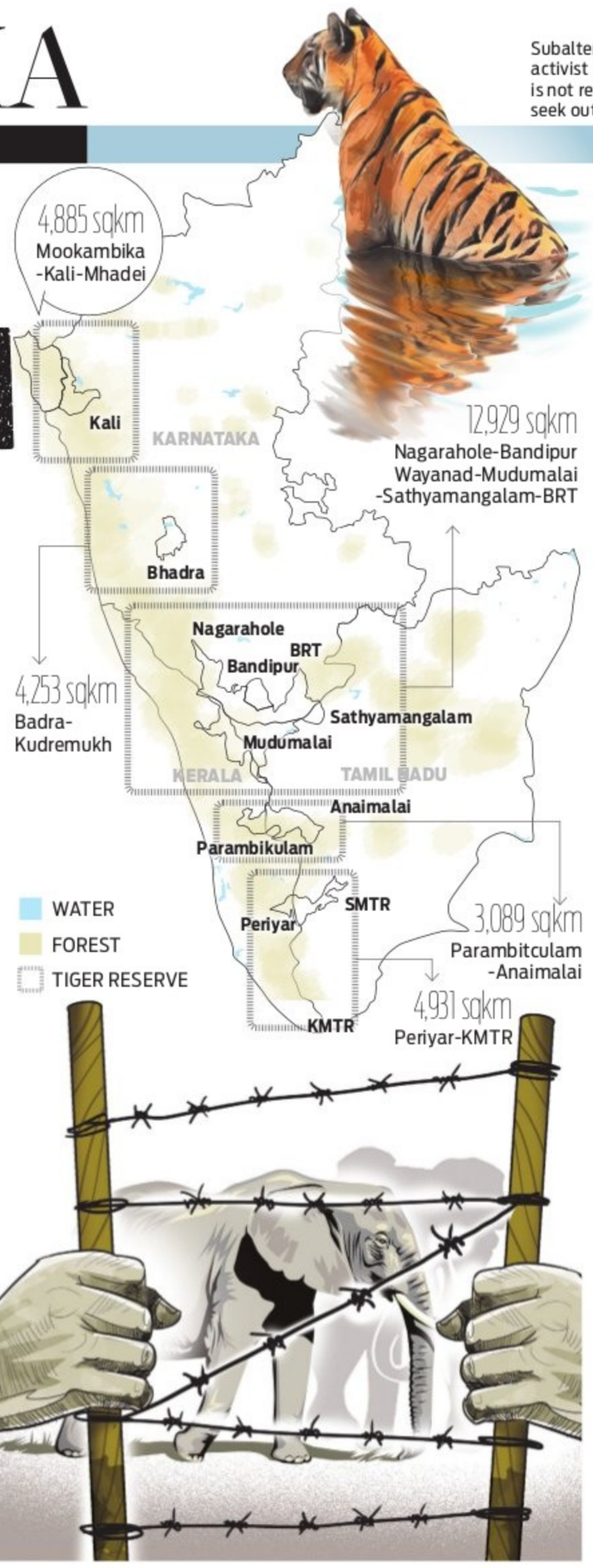
Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka
Karnataka State Road Safety Authority
CLOSING CEREMONY
National Road Safety Month
Date : 26th February 2024 Monday Time : 4.00 P.M.
Venue : Yavanika, Nrupatunga Road, Bengaluru
Shri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka
Wear helmet while riding (BIS Certified Helmet)
Do not use Mobile while driving
Strictly follow the Road Signals
Always Drive within Speed Limit
Don't Drink & Drive
Always wear seat belt
Presided by
Sri Rizwan Arshad,
MLA, Shivajinagar Constituency
In the August Presence of
Sri Ramalinga Reddy,
Hon'ble Minister for Transport
and Muzrai Department
Sri Ramalinga Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Transport and Muzrai Department at a Departmental Programme
As enshrined in our Constitution - to safeguard public property and to abjure violence is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India.
BE A ROAD SAFETY HERO
Dr. N.V. Prasad I.A.S.
Secretary,
Transport Department
Yogeesh A.M. I.A.S.
Commissioner,
Transport & Road Safety
J. Purushotham
Additional Commissioner & Member Secretary,
Karnataka State Road Safety Authority

Subaltern culture is the real India, said Indhudhara Honnapura, social activist and journalist. "It forms the largest group, but unfortunately, it is not recognised enough in our Constitution. The government has to seek out such groups of people and support them," Honnapura said

BIG PICTURE

Elephantine PROBLEM

Quick, coordinated action need to reduce man-animal conflict



BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

WILDLIFE conflict is not new, but governments of three prime states of Western Ghats -- Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu -- need to come up with innovative solutions to mitigate it.

The Karnataka government's decision to give an ex-gratia to Ajeesh Joseph Panachiyil, a tribal from Wayanad, who was killed in an elephant attack, has again brought to fore the issue of man-animal conflict and its management.

Animals know no political boundaries, but their movement, especially radio-collared ones, and ensuing problems have raised issues of coordination and management among the three states that share borders. The human-animal conflict is more pronounced in the Western Ghats, which has the highest wildlife population and is home to prime national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), in its recently released tiger estimation report -- Status of Tigers, co-predators and prey in India- 2022 - Final Report, said the Western Ghats, encompassing 140,000 sqkm, that traverses through Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat is one of the most-populated biodiversity hotspots in the world and faces numerous threats pertaining to human-induced activities.

Experts say the ministry's observations are bang on. Despite the use of technology, orders from high courts of the three states and scientific reports, man-animal conflicts are only on the rise, year on year. The governments have seen little success in voluntary tribal resettlement, controlling change of land use and management of national parks and sanctuaries. Adding to the problem is the rise in commercial activities in the name of tourism, even eco-tourism.

The three states have prime tiger reserves of the country -- Bandipur, Nagarhole and BRT in Karnataka, Satymanagala and Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu and Wayanad in Kerala. As per the 2022 tiger census report, the Western Ghats region hosts 1,087 tigers.

In August 2023, the Karnataka government released a report -- Asian Elephant (Elephas maximus) Population, Size and Structure Estimates for Karnataka -- which stated that the state houses 6,395 elephants.

"The fragmentation of habitat occurs when landscape continuity is broken and forests shrink into smaller patches, resulting in honeycombing. This is a major cause of human-wildlife conflicts as it directly affects ecological and behavioural factors such as foraging movements, dispersal, migrations and colonisation abilities of species. Fragmentation also exposes more of the forests to increased contact with human settlements, roads, railway lines and such infrastructure. This increased exposure, as is happening in the landscape across three states from Nagarahole – Wayanad - Bandipur – Mudumalai and BRT, is driving increased human-wildlife conflict. Voluntary resettlement and strategic land acquisitions to reduce fragmentation have to be taken up in the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) mode urgently," said Praveen Bhargav, Trustee, Wildlife First, and former member, National Board for Wildlife.

Explaining why conflict has increased over the years, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) BK Singh said conflict is not new. It is not just limited to elephants, but is also from tigers, leopards, gaurs, sloth bears and all animals.

Dr Nishant Srinivasaiah, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Raman Sukumar's Lab, IISc, says there is no one specific answer. "It depends on the local ecological and anthropogenic conditions. If we look at the change of seasons from post-monsoon to now getting into summer, increased movement of animals looking for forage and water is expected and this movement results in chance encounters and increased ruins with people and infrastructure. Built-up areas are increasing, which means it is much more difficult for animals to navigate through increasing human spaces. Another is the adaptive responses of wildlife that are living alongside people mostly in secondary habitats, manifested in increased range areas sometimes to regions in which historically they did not occur."

Recently, Union Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav, during his visit to Bandipur and Wayanad, said man- animal conflict along the borders of these two reserves is of grave concern. He also said chief wildlife wardens, under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Section 11, can issue orders to either capture or shoot an animal to combat conflict.

Later, the Kerala government announced roping in of sharpshooter Nawab Shafath Ali Khan to shoot dead the makhana that killed Ajeesh. It was the same makhana that was captured by the Karnataka forest department officials in Belur, Hassan district, in November 2023 and released into the core forest of Bandipur Tiger Reserve the same day, after being radio collared.

Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said Karnataka takes pride in housing the highest number of elephants, but it also faces the problem of conflict. Habitats are shrinking and around 50% of the forest is infested with lantana, which is another major cause for conflict.

Hearing multiple cases of conflict, courts in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, over the years, have ordered regular tripartite meetings among the states. The National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court too had made a similar point. Following these observations, meetings at the level of PCCF and Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) started to happen. It was announced that meetings at PCCF level should happen annually and that of DCFs once in six months.

On February 23, after Yadav's visit and Ajeesh's death, additional chief secretaries of the three states, along with PCCFs, DGPs and DCFs, held a virtual meeting.

A Karnataka official admitted that the meetings have little impact as what is decided is not implemented because of other pressing issues listed by respective state governments.

"Merely having meetings is a waste of time and resources. The law (Wildlife Act) being the same across three states, the most important issue is to develop a scientific management plan to manage this landscape which supports the biggest meta-population of Asiatic elephants and tigers. This plan must be peer reviewed by independent ecologists and conservationists who have extensive knowledge of these habitats and are aware of how they recovered and the historical failures of certain interventions," Bhargav said.

PCCF, Wildlife, Subhash Malkhade said, "At tripartite meetings, discussion is on border protection and conflict. But the major focus now is on forest fire management. We share information about fires with neighbouring states and vice versa. Information on poachers, animals and smugglers, captured on camera traps and call records, is also shared. The movement of elephants is also shared as Karnataka is radio-collaring them," he added.

Karnataka is the only state in the Western Ghats that is radio-collaring elephants and tigers before relocating them into the wild. The movement of these animals is tracked on the Hejje app. Karnataka has been radio-collaring elephants for the last six years and 10 have been collared in the last one year, including bulls, female heads of herds and makhanas. Earlier, GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication) technology was used, now it is satellite based. But there is a catch as the movement is captured only once in two hours.

"In case of Belur Makhana, the Kerala forest department was informed of its movement, but they did little to track it. When they asked us for its new coordinates after Ajeesh's death, it was traced to the core area of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve," said a Karnataka forest department official.

While Kerala appreciated Karnataka for the use of technology, it pointed that more needs to be done. D Jayaprasad, PCCF, Wildlife, Kerala, said, "Karnataka shares information, but it should share equipment too. The satellite data is not continuous. The antennas need to be shared."

Another reason for conflict, a Karnataka forest department official pointed out, was the forest patch in one state meeting with non-forest patch (revenue pockets and urban areas) in another state. Citing the example of Satymanagala and BRT, the official said that every year, elephants from Satymanagala enter non-forest patches near BRT, creating havoc. This has left locals in Karnataka agitated as they are losing crops and lives. To such incidents, other states too should radio-collar elephants, he suggested.

Srinivasaiah, working on elephants and radio collaring, said collars are simple tools that help understand the behaviour of animals as far as their movement is concerned at a fine scale. It throws light on aspects like habitat use, identifying feeding and movement areas, home ranges and territories. "It is not a solution to address conflict, but a mere tool to help understand the animals. It is increasingly being used to also inform people of animals living close to their areas. Conflict can be mitigated through proper coordination and cooperation," he added.

There are points on which coordination is needed. Problems arise only when there is conflict. There is now an urgent need to find solutions. Creating elephant corridors is not easy and takes time. Each state has its own policy.

Dr Srinivas Reddy, PCCF, Wildlife, Tamil Nadu

Civil works like roads and construction of homestays and resorts are happening in all three states and they are a problem. Another major issue is that these resort owners are constructing water bodies and salt licks to draw elephants.

D Jayaprasad, PCCF, Wildlife, Kerala

One of the prime reasons for conflict is human interference and change in cropping patterns. Everywhere crops like banana, sugarcane, vegetables and other such are being grown that attract elephants. There is no lack of coordination, but each one has a different working method.

Subhash Malkhade, PCCF, Wildlife, Karnataka

It may be surprising but allocating large budgets to Nagarahole, Bandipur and other parks in this landscape is, arguably, another big driver of conflict. This is because the surplus funds enable various unscientific and ecologically disastrous management interventions which include a slew of earthmoving and civil works like creation of unnecessary water holes

Praveen Bhargav, Trustee - Wildlife First, Former Member - National Board for Wildlife

DEFEAT MODI OR FACE DICTATORSHIP: KHARGE

Leaders of I.N.D.I.A bloc including AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge take oath at the 'Constitution and National Unity' conference at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru

CONTINUING his tirade against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday alleged that Modi is taking the country towards dictatorship and urged people to stand united to defeat him in the Lok Sabha polls.

"The Constitution, which is under threat, has to be saved and followed. Many have been trying to erase and change it. In the coming polls, if you don't stand strong and united, the country will certainly degenerate into a dictatorship. It is up to you to choose dictatorship or justifiable living," he warned.

He was speaking at the valedictory of 'Constitution and National Unity' conference, organised by the Karnataka government's social welfare department at Palace Grounds.

He alleged that BJP and RSS are hatching a conspiracy to put an end to the Constitution. "Outwardly, Modi says that we (BJP) will safeguard the Constitution. But why have they been using the Enforcement Directorate if they are protecting the Constitution," he asked.

He alleged that BJP has been removing elected governments by purchasing democratically elected legislators and taking states into its clutches as happened in Karnataka, Manipur, Goa and Uttarakhand.

"This experiment has been done all over the country as elected representatives were threatened and taken into their clutches. How good is it for democracy and the Constitution? Modi should tell. It is a jolt to the Constitution and democracy as people elected as per the rules laid down by the Election Commission of India have been targeted. If BJP continues in the same fashion, it will result in the country slipping into a dictatorship," he said.

He asked people not to be misled and said democracy will survive only if they are vigilant. People in some neighbouring countries were ignorant and ended up being under dictatorship, he added. "The architect of the Constitution, Dr BR Ambedkar, in his last speech to the Constituent Assembly, said we must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood. But Modi has been sucking the blood," he charged.

He mocked Modi for claiming the guarantees as his own, though the taxes paid by the people are funding them. "He does not say they are the BJP government's guarantees either, but claims them as his own. If an individual makes such claims, it means he is taking the country towards dictatorship," he remarked.

He suggested that more awareness programmes be held to save the Constitution and asked people to spread the message. If there is no Constitution, the country will regress to what it was 5,000 years ago, he warned.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah expressed his concern over the trustworthiness of electronic voting machines (EVMs), saying, "We don't trust machines that are doctored. The Election Commission of India should give due consideration to this." He said the only way forward for the people is to face the challenge and fight evil forces that are dividing the country on the lines of religion. "Various issues have to be debated with regard to the progress of the country. Kashmir has been part of India and it will remain so in future," he said.

Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi MP from Chidambaram, Thirumavalavan, said the INDIA bloc has come into existence to safeguard democracy. "We should fight against EVMs. Otherwise, we will not achieve our goal. Modi in Parliament exhorted that they (NDA) will win 400 seats. How can they achieve it, unless there is a conspiracy," he questioned.

CPI leader D Raja and CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury, leaders Prof KM Khadir Mohideen of Muslim League, Manoj Bhattacharya, JMM General Secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya and NK Premachandran among others attacked Modi.

CM: Saffron party tearing apart Constitution in bits and pieces

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said the BJP is against social justice, follows 'Manusmriti' and has no faith in the Constitution. "Fearing that if the constitution is changed straightaway, it may result in bloodshed, the party has resorted to twisting and weakening the Constitution indirectly," he said at the 'Constitution and National Unity' conference.

"Anantkumar Hegde, who was Union minister in the Narendra Modi cabinet, had declared that they came to power to change the Constitution. Neither PM Modi, (Home Minister) Amit Shah, BJP nor RSS condemned him. Didn't oppose him either. Hegde had showed the agenda and ambition of the BJP and RSS. People of the entire country should wake up and realise this," he said.

Siddaramaiah appealed to people to vote against the BJP and support the Congress and its allies in the I.N.D.I.A bloc.

He warned that democracy will not survive if those who came to power to change the Constitution are not removed. Constitution is the embodiment of the wishes of Buddha, Basavadi Sharana, Vachana Kranti and of Kuvempu, Narayanguru, Vivekananda among other greats. "The rights of working people of this country, of labourers, farmers and women, lie in the constitution. All of them will be forced back to slavery if the Constitution is changed," he said.

Around 40 leaders from 18 states and 12 political parties attended the conference.

Fearing that if the constitution is changed straightaway, it may result in bloodshed, the party has resorted to twisting and weakening the Constitution indirectly — Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

Not the India we cherish, is it? Prof

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"THE government at Centre in India refused me entry to a conference where I was invited by the state government. Unless this is fixed, I join the ranks of the Tibetan exiles and Ukrainian exiles and others throughout history who have faced the arbitrary exercise of brute unreasoning power," Kaul posted.

Tagging Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal, she questioned, "How can the world's largest democracy be threatened by my pen and the word? How is it ok for Centre to not allow a professor to be at a conference on Constitution where she was invited by state government? To give no reason? Not the India we cherish, is it?" When TNIE tried to contact Minister Mahadevappa, the calls went unanswered.

Congress MLA Naik passes away in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

RAJA Venakatappa Naik, sitting Congress MLA from Shorapura Assembly constituency in Yadgir district, passed away due to a heart attack at a private hospital in Bengaluru on Sunday. He was 67 years old. Naik is survived by his wife and two sons.

The four-time MLA was a close associate of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge. He was recently appointed chairman of the Karnataka Warehouse Corporation. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Kharge, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and others paid their condolences. Naik's last rites will be held with full state honours. Shivakumar said he met Naik four days back when the latter was shifted from the ICU. "He wrote in a paper and told me that he would come to attend the Rajya Sabha polls that will be held on Tuesday. It is a sad day for me," he said. Siddaramaiah, who visited the hospital, said Naik was a cultured politician. He always showed concern for people's problems. "He was appointed chairperson for the Warehouse Corporation. Unfortunately, he could not work," the CM said. Naik became MLA in 1994, 1999 and 2013.

Session postponed

The Legislative session, which was supposed to conclude on Monday, has been postponed to Wednesday as the houses will pay tribute to Naik. Siddaramaiah, who was to reply on the budget on Monday, told reporters that as the Rajya Sabha polls will be held on Tuesday, he will put forth his answers on Wednesday.

EXPRESS READ

Hundi tax: Suo motu case against Hegde for 'mocking' Siddaramaiah

Karwar: A suo motu case has been filed against Uttara Kannada MP Ananth Kumar Hegde for mocking Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the government's proposed "hundi tax" from Hindu temples. The Bill was defeated in the Legislative Council. In a meeting in Mundgod, Hegde had lashed out at the CM, calling him "anti-Hindu" and accusing him of appeasing the minority. He cited various schemes and allocations made by Siddaramaiah and stated that it was the CM who plays divisive politics. He also addressed Siddaramaiah in the singular. Following this, the Uttara Kannada police lodged a case against him. The police top brass in the district confirmed that a case has been lodged against the MP over his statements. ENS

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Government of India

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Prime Minister

26th February, 2024 | 10:30 AM

Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

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Justice Anjaria takes oath as CJ of K'taka HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

JUSTICE Nilay Vipinchandra Anjaria took oath as the 34th Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court on Sunday. Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot administered the oath to Justice Anjaria at Raj Bhavan here. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Chairman of Legislative Council Basavaraj S Horatti, who were present on the occasion, greeted Chief Justice Anjaria.

Justice Anjaria is the third Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court in the last 32 days. Earlier Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale was elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court on January 24. After this, Justice P S Dinesh Kumar took oath as the Chief Justice on February 3. Justice Dinesh Kumar retired on February 24, after serving for 22 days as Chief Justice. Justice Anjaria, born on March 23, 1965, Ahmedabad in Gujarat, was serving as the senior-most judge of the High Court of Gujarat until his elevation as the Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah congratulates Justice Nilay Vipinchandra Anjaria at Raj Bhavan on Sunday | EXPRESS

A native of Mandvi in Kachchh district, Justice Anjaria hails from a lawyer family and his father had served in the judiciary. He started practice in the High Court of Gujarat from August 1988. He conducted matters involving constitutional issues and all categories of civil cases, labour, and service.

He had been a Standing Counsel/Panel Advocate for the High Court and subordinate Courts, State Election Commission, Gujarat Information Commission, Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation, and Municipalities in Gujarat.

He was awarded a Research Fellowship in 1992 by Late Shri Navinchandra Desai Foundation, Ahmedabad on 'Freedom of Speech and Expression - With Reference to Media', and also served as honorary Associate Editor, Gujarat Law Herald. He has authored several articles on constitutional and legal subjects, published in books and law journals.

He was elevated as an Additional Judge of the High Court of Gujarat on November 21, 2011, and confirmed as a permanent Judge on September 9, 2013.

Murder suspected as woman, two kids die in Dharwad dist

MALLIKARJUN HIREMATH @Dharwad

TWO children were killed and their mother was found hanging at Morab village in Navalgund taluk. The deceased have been identified as Savitri Sarkar (32) and her kids Suma (5) and Darshan (4).

The incident came to light on Sunday morning when the door of the house was found open and there was no noise or activity inside the house. It is suspected that the three might have been murdered. Some suspect that Savitri might have strangled her kids before hanging herself. Savitri's husband, a farmer, had left for Ulavi to take part in the Ulavi fair.

According to neighbours, there was no dispute between the couple and other family members.

Savitri was a resident of nearby Sulla. She had spoken to her neighbours on Saturday night. There are rumours that she was wanted to go to Ulavi but her husband refused to take her. Some people said Savitri was a very lively person and took active part in festivals and other occasions. However, the woman's family members suspect that unknown persons might have murdered the trio.

A case has been registered at Navalgund rural station.

Puttenahalli Branch
No. 94, 94 & 95, 1st Floor, Sri Krishna Plaza, Kothanur Main Road, J.P. Nagar 7th Phase, Bangalore-560078.
Ph : 9653616591, Email : ubin0816591@unionbankofindia.bank

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1) To, Name and address of the Borrower/Mortagagor : Mr. Raja Ramar, No. 38, 2nd Cross, Gowdanapalya, Subramanyapura, Bangalore-56001. **(2) Mrs. Gantha Raja,** No. 38, 2nd Cross, Gowdanapalya, Subramanyapura, Bangalore-560061. **Guarantor : 3) Mr. M. Ekambaram,** No. 131, Chikka Gowdanapalya, Subramanyapura Post, Bangalore-560061.

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Notice dt. **14.02.2024** issued to you u/s 13(2) with Sec.13 (3) of The Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 by **Puttenhalli Branch, Bangalore.** /me, the Authorised Officer, was sent to you calling upon to repay the dues in your loan account/s with us at your last known address could not be served. Therefore, the contents of the said demand notice are being published in this newspaper.
The credit facilities/loan facilities availed by you have been classified as NPA on **25.01.2024.**
You have executed loan documents while availing the facilities and created security interest in favour of the Bank. The details of the credit Facilities and secured assets are as under :
Credit facilities availed with outstanding amount A/c No. ABPTL-16593100034943 as on **25.01.2024, Rs. 32,52,966.27** (Rupees Thirty Two Lakh Fifty Two Thousand Nine hundred Sixty Six and Twenty Seven paise only) together with further interest and charges at the contractual rate.

Type of Facility	Outstanding amount as on date of 25.01.2024	Un applied interest w.e.f.	Penal Interest (Simple)	Cost/ Charges incurred by Bank.	Total dues as on 14.02.2024 (in Rs.)
ABPTL - 165930100034943	Rs. 31.0.669.33 + further interest and charges	Rs. 95,758/-	NIL	Rs. 26,538.94	Rs. 32,52,966.27 + further interest and charges

Schedule of the Property : All that piece and parcel of Property bearing Site No. 38, PID No. 55-637-44, situated at Kadirenahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore-560070 and measuring East to West 29 feet and North to South 40 Feet and bounded by : **East by :** Property of S. Pandian, **West by :** Property of G.R. Basavaraj, **North by :** Property Factory, **South by :** Road.

2) To, Name and address of the Borrower / Mortagagor : 1) Mr. Chandra Sekhar .C S/o. Mr. Chikka Biddappa, **2) Mrs. Sunitha .H.R** W/o. Mr. Chandra Sekhar .C, Both are residing at : No. 249, 1st Main, 1st Cross, Singasandra, Hosur Main Road, Bangalore - 560 068.

Notice dt. **14.02.2024** issued to you u/s 13(2) read with Sec.13 (3) of Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 by **Puttenahalli Branch, Bangalore** /me, the Authorised Officer, was sent to you calling upon to repay the dues in your loan account/s with us at your last known address could not be served. Therefore, the contents of the said demand notice are being published in this newspaper.
The credit facilities/loan facilities availed by you have been classified as NPA on **28.08.2023.**
You have executed loan documents while availing the facilities and created security interest in favour of the Bank. The details of the credit Facilities and secured assets are as under :
Credit facilities availed with outstanding amount as on **28.08.2023, A/c No. 1) HLPGN - 165930100014295, Rs. 21,17,660.14** (Rupees Twenty One Lakh Seventeen Thousand Six Hundred Sixty & Fourteen paise only) together with further interest and charges at the contractual rate.

Sl. No.	Type of Facility	Outstanding amount as on date of 28.08.2023	Un applied interest w.e.f. 28.08.2023 to 14.02.2024	Penal Interest (Simple)	Cost/ Charges incurred by Bank.	Total dues as on 14.02.2024 (in Rs.)
1.	HLPGN 165930100014295	Rs. 19,98,376.74	Rs. 71,361/-	NIL	Rs. 47,923/-	Rs. 21,17,660.14

Description of the Secured Assets/s : All that piece and parcel of Property Vacant Site No. 3/6, Khatha No. 3/6, Situated at Singasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Measuring East to West : 39.5 Feet and North to South : 25.5 Feet, Total measuring 1007.25, Sq. Ft. and bounded on the : **East by :** Property of Pillanna, **West by :** Property of Venkatesh, **North by :** Property of Pilla Reddy, 1, **South by :** Road.

Therefore, You as above mention **Borrowers/Mortagagors & Gaurantors** in terms of the aforesaid notice have been called upon to pay the above said amount together with future interest and charges thereon within 60 days from the date of this publication. That on your failure to comply therewith we, the secured creditor, shall be entitled to exercise all or any of the rights under Section 13(4) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002. In terms of Section 13(13) of the Act you shall not transfer the secured assets aforesaid from the date of receipt of the notice without Bank's prior consent. Please take note of the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Date : 26.02.2024 **Sd/- Authorised Officer**
Place : Bangalore **Union Bank of India**

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -I FOR THE STATE OF KARNATAKA AT BANGALORE
4th Floor, Telephone House (BSNL) Building, Rajabhavan Road, Bangalore-560 001.

ORIGINAL APPLICATION No. 494/2023
Between :
CANARA BANK
(Erstwhile SYNDICATE BANK), Garden City College Campus Branch, Garden City College Campus Virgonagar Post, Bengaluru Represented by its Manager **Smt. Kondamala Gayatri** W/o Sri. M.Sreedhar Babu Aged about 36 years, Email:-cb10498@canarabank.com Phone Number 94918 84150 IFSC Code: CNRB0010498

... Applicant

AND:
01. M/s.DEEKSHA ENTERPRISES No.76/2, Shop No.4, Bhattarahalli, Kithiganur Main Road, Bengaluru - 560049. PAN NO.ARIPN1604N Its proprietor D.N.Shekar Gowda since deceased represented his legal heirs/legal representatives 01.SMT. DEEKSHA 02. MASTER SHIVAYS GOWDA, Since minor represented by his mother and Natural Guardian Smt.Deeksha
02. Smt.DEEKSHA W/o. late Shekar Gowda D.N. Aged about 25 years Voter id No.UZJ6505911
03. MASTER SHIVAY S. GOWDA S/o. late Shekar Gowda D.N.
Aged about 3 years Since minor represented by his mother and Natural Guardian Smt.Deeksha
Both are residing at Devaranayakanahalli village Reddihalli Post, Channarayapatna Hobli, Devanahalli taluk Bengaluru Rural District
04.SRI. HARISH KUMAR Y.R S/o. Sri. Ramakrishnappa V Aged about 37 years, Yachnahalli, Mallnayakanahalli Kolar-563136 Mob: 7892042663

DEFENDANTS

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT NO. 1 TO 4 ISSUED UNDER RULE 23 (VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993.

WHEREAS the Applicant has instituted an Application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 against you for the recovery of a sum of **Rs.22,99,610/-** (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Six Hundred and Ten Only) from the loan accounts together with the agreed rate of current and future interest with costs and other reliefs. You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of this publication or on **10.07.2024 at 10.30 a.m.** in the forenoon in person or by a pleader/Advocate duly instructed as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted.
Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 21st day of February, 2024.

By order of the Tribunal
Registrar
The Debts Recovery Tribunal-1, Bangalore

IDFC First Bank Limited
(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) | CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 7th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022
AUTHORIZED OFFICER- Preeti Toshniwal - CONTACT NUMBER – 9694702013
AUTHORIZED OFFICER- Samson Castelino - CONTACT NUMBER- 9164040717

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6) & 9 (1)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) & 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (ii) that the below described immovable properties as per column (iii) mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" On 19.03.2024 as described hereunder, for the recovery of amount due from Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (i), due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd).
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com.

S. NO	(i) Demand Notice Amount	(ii) Name Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s)	(iii) PROPERTY ADDRESS	(iv) Reserve Price Amount	(v) EMD Amount	(vi) Date and Time of Auction	(vii) Date and Time of EMD Auction	(viii) Date and Time of Inspection
1	INR 31,45,383.88/- Demand Notice Dated: 09-December-2019	**Praveen Panikuttira Bheemaiah & Shilpa M C**	All that piece and parcel of the property Apartment bearing No.005, measuring 990 square feet of super built up area at ground Floor of the building in the project known as "MVS ORCHIDS" along with 329 square feet of undivided share of right, title and interest in the land with a car parking space at the basement of the building constructed on the property bearing extract of E Swathu bearing No.504/1, Old Site Nos.53 to 70 & Site No.1, admeasuring 21,605 square feet, formed in residentially converted land bearing Survey No.30, situated at Kavalahosahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Anekal Taluk, comprising of stilt, ground and three upper floors building, bounded on:-xEast by : Open to Sky, West by : Common Corridor, North by : Open to Sky & Staicase & South by : Open to Sky & Portion of Flat No. 006	**INR 21,04,506/-**	INR 2,10,450.6/-	**19th March 2024 11.00 AM TO 1.00 PM**	18th March 2024 11.00 AM TO 5.00 PM	**13th March 2024 1.00 PM TO 4.00 PM**

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale the movable assets, if any, present at the immovable property.

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd)

Date: 26.02.2024

Your Guide to Spicy Living INDULGE Every Friday with THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

VEERASHAIVA SAHAKARI BANK LTD.,
Admin. Office : No. 1732/32, M.C.Road, M.C.Layout, Vijayanagara, Bangalore - 560 040 Phone : 23307070 / 23358017 Fax : 23148550
E-mail : vsbbengaluru@gmail.com

AUCTION SALE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

Auction Sale under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 of the Residential Building mortgaged with **M/s. Veerashaiva Sahakari Bank Ltd,** Admin. Office : No. 1732/32, M.C.Road, M.C. Layout, Vijayanagara, Bengaluru-560 040, the Auction is under **'AS IS, WHERE IS AND WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS'**

Sl No.	Name & Address of the Borrower and Guarantor	Description of the Residential Property Mortgauged to Bank	Amount Due to the Bank	Date of Public Auction
1.	**Sri Satish Kumar B & Sri Mohan Kumar B** S/o Late Bhadraiah N. B.G.Palya, Kalya Post, Kasaba Hobli, Magadi Taluk, Ramanagara District. **Loan A/c No.: MTLN / 323 (Vijayanagar Branch)** **Name & Address of Gurantors : 1) Smt Vanajakshamma.** W/o Late N. Bhadraiah. **2) Smt. Hemalatha R.** W/o Sri B.Satish Kumar both are residing at No.: 203, Kumbara Beedi, Ward No. 11, Doom Light Circle,Magadi Town, Ramanagara District - 562120 3) **Rudraswamy** Head Master (Retd.) Kanchugal Bandemutt, Sri Thontdarya Sanskrit School Magadi Taluk, Ramanagara Dist.	**No. 203/1676/1570/1326, Kumbara Beedi, Ward No. 11, Doom Light Circle, Magadi Town, Ramanagara District - 562120, Measuring : East to West : 21 feet, North to South : 35 feet Total 735 Sq.Ft. in the Name of Borrowers & bounded by:** East by : Mangalore Clinic West by : Residence of Smt. M.B. Gangambike North by : Vacant site belongs to M.B.Chandrashekar South by : Government Road.	**Rs. 7,02,439-00** (Rupees Seven lakh two thousand four hundred thirty nine only) as on 23-02-2024 **Interest upto** 31-01-2024 and further interest and other charges as applicable	**28-03-2024 Thrusday at 11.00 a.m.**
		Reserve Price **Rs. 40,53,600-00** (Rupees forty lakhs fifty three thousand six hundred only)	**EMD** (Refundable) **Rs.4,05,400-00** (Rupees four lakh five thousand four hundred only)	

Place of Autuion : Veerashaiva Sahakari Bank Ltd., Admin. Office, No. 1732/32, M.C.Road, M.C.Layout, Vijayanagara, Bengaluru-560040.

Demand Notice U/s 13(2) of the said Act on 10-11-2021
Possession Notice U/s 13(4) of the said Act on 03-01-2024

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AUCTION SALE

1. The Public Auction will be conducted in the premises at **Veerashaiva Sahakari Bank Ltd.,** Admin. Office, No. 1732/32, M.C.Road, M.C.Layout, Vijayanagara, Bengaluru-560 040.
2. Bids should be submitted in a closed cover addressed to the Authorised Officer and should reach the above address accompanied by a refundable interest free EMD, in the form of **RTGS/NEFT/Pay Order/Demand Draft** of a Scheduled Bank favouring of **Veerashaiva Sahakari Bank Ltd.,** Payable at Bengaluru on or before 4.30 P.M. on 27-03-2024
   The sale will be in **'AS IS WHERE IS AND WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS'.**
3. The property will not be sold below the **'RESERVE PRICE'**
4. The Successful bidder should pay 25% of the bid amount (inclusive of EMD) immediately on the same day and the balance 75% of the bid amount within 15 days thereafter. If the successful bidder defaults in effecting payment or fails to adhere to the terms of sale in any manner, the amount already deposited will be forfeited and he/she shall not have any claim on such forfeited amount or to the property, which will be sold subsequently.
5. On confirmation of sale by the authorised officer and if the terms of payment have been complied with the authorised officer exercising the power of sale shall issue a sale certificate of Immovable property in favour of the purchaser in the form given in appendix-V of the Securitisation Act, 2002.
6. The EMD of the unsuccessful bidder will be returned immediately on conclusion of the auction.
7. At any stage of the auction, the authorised officer shall have the power to accept or reject the bids or postpone/ cancel the auction without assigning any reason thereof including addition or deletion of other terms.
8. All other charges, expenses like conveyance, Electricity, BWSSB, Legal, Stamp duty, Registration Fee, Arrears of Tax charged if any, shall be borne by the purchaser only.
   For further details, Please contact the Branch Manager, Vijayanagar Branch, during office hours between 9.00 AM to 4.30 PM on any working day. Contact Telephone No. 080 23307070 & Mobile No.9986038902 or Authorised Officer Contact Mobile 9986038903.
9. For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending bidders are at liberty to make their own inspection/assessment, enquiries about the property
10. The Sale is subject to the confirmation by the bank. **This is also a notice to the borrower for information and necessary action.**

sd/-
Authorised Officer,
Veerashaiva Sahakari Bank Ltd.,
Bengaluru-560 040

Bengaluru
Date : 25-02-2024

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› JACK LONDON

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that **SRI.RAJESH.R** is the owner of immovable property mentioned in the schedule hereunder and he has lost the typed page Nos.4 & 5 of original Gift Deed dated 25/10/2018 bearing Document No.3812/ 2018-19, Book-1, stored in CD 129 executed by Smt.G.Janakamma in favour of her son Sri.Rajesh.R registered in the office of Sub-registrar, Srirampuram, Bangalore, pertaining to the schedule property: In case anybody having any claims or in possession of the said document, shall inform the under singed and handover the same within SEVEN DAYS from the date of publication of this notice.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of land in Sy.No.24/23A, situated at Mallattahalli Village, Yashwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, comes within limits of BBMP No.302/24/23A, Bangalore (measuring 5 guntas) measuring east to west 72 feet and north to south 75 feet, totally 5400 Sq.ft and bounded on the : East by: Road & Ashwatha Katte. West by: Private property, North by: Private property, South by : Private Property.

N. JAGADEESH KUMAR, Advocate
No.30/1, 2nd Floor, 7th Cross, Near NR Colony Bus Stand,Opp. Hotel Dwaraka, Bangalore-560019. *Cell # 9341261700*

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the general public that my client Sri. N. G. Ganesh Babu, S/o Late N. V. Gopal Krishna, residing at No.1346, 32nd 'E' Cross, 4th 'T' Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560041 (Mobile No.9844074396) has lost the original Sale Deed dated 31/03/2017, registered as document No.SHV-1-07411/2016-2017 of Book I and stored in CD.No.SHVD247, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Shivajinagar, pertaining to the immovable properties more fully described in the schedule 'B' and 'C' herein below.
My client had lodged a police complaint in this regard vide Lost Article Report No. 0943652/2024 dated 21/02/2024. Any persons in possession of the aforesaid original document shall return the same to the undersigned or to my client **within 7 days** from the date of this notice.

SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property being converted land bearing Survey Nos.1/3, 1/4 & 1/5 having BBMP Khata No.4047, situated at Kasavanahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, measuring 1 Acre 36 Guntas and bounded on the:
East by : Road, West by : Private Property, North by : Munireddy Shyamanna Reddy Marappa's Property, South by : Private Property.

SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY

An undivided share, right, title and interest in the schedule 'A' property i.e., equivalent to 742.79 sq. ft.

SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY

A Three Bed Room Residential Apartment bearing Flat No. A-203, in Block 'A' with vitrified flooring, corresponding to schedule 'B' property and having a super built-up area of 1630 sq. ft., on the 2nd Floor along with one covered car park space in the basement in the project known as 'LOTUS PALACE', built on the schedule 'A' property.

Sd/- **B. NARENDRA BALIGA,** Advocate
No.468/21, 1st Floor, 26th Main, 39th Cross, 9th Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru - 560069.
Mobile: 98459 52566
Place: Bengaluru Date: 25/02/2024

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MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ALIMCO

" Our government is working steadfastly to make the life of every person in society easy. Be it senior citizens, divyangjan, tribal people or the deprived sections of the society, our topmost priority is to serve and protect the interests of 140 crore Indians. "
- **Narendra Modi,** Prime Minister

Empowerment Through Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana & ADIP Scheme

Distribution of Assistive Devices to Senior Citizens and Divyangjan Under RVY & ADIP Scheme

For Senior Citizens of BPL category or having monthly income not more than **15000/-**

Facility of registration is also available for new beneficiaries

Total cost being borne by the Government of India

Monday, 26 February 2024 | 11:00 a.m.
Government PU College Ground, Malleshwaram, 18th Cross, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Chief Guest
SH. A NARAYANASWAMY
HON'BLE UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Transforming Lives of Senior Citizens

Free distribution of assistive devices at the camp to 2100 identified beneficiaries

Distribution of 8951 devices under Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana and ADIP Scheme

cbc 38101/13/0071/2324

Toll Free National Helpline for Senior Citizens **14567**
To know more, log on to **https://socialjustice.gov.in/**
Follow on Social Media /Department of Social Justice and Empowerment

In a case of honour killing in Chennai, a 22-year-old Dalit, Praveen, was hacked to death by a five-member gang on Saturday night. He was married to Sharmila D (20), an OBC, which is said to be the reason for his murder. The victim's brother-in-law is the primary suspect

TDP, JSP chiefs pacify upset leaders

Naidu meets party leaders, explains seat sharing; Pawan Kalyan leaves it to deputies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayawada

A DAY after the announcement of the first list of candidates for upcoming elections, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu was busy with pacifying the disgruntled party leaders, who could not get tickets because of the electoral alliance with the Jana Sena Party (JSP), as was JSP chief Pawan Kalyan seen dousing flames of disgruntlement in the party rank.

Naidu summoned former minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad, an aspirant of Tenali Assembly segment in Guntur district and pacified him. As the seat was declared to JSP political affairs committee chairman Nadendla Manohar. He is said to have assured Prasad to provide a suitable alternative opportunity.

Emerging from the meeting, Rajendra Prasad expressed satisfaction over talks with Naidu. Another former minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao, whose name also has not figured in the first list, called on Naidu. Speaking to media after the meeting, he said that he was suggested to contest from Chipurupalli constituency against education minister Botcha Satyanarayana.

"I expressed my desire to contest from Bheemili, but was told that I was capable of winning the elections from any constituency. Naidu asked me to leave the matter to him to decide, he said.

Another senior, Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao also held discussions with Naidu and was explained the reason for his name missing from the first list. "I am like a family member of Naidu and I will abide by whatever decision my chief takes," he told media.

Naidu also summoned the leaders like BK Parthasarathi, who was denied ticket to contest from Penukonda constituency of erstwhile Anantapur district, Peela Govind from Anakapalle constituency, which ticket was allocated to the JSP and other leaders to explain the circumstances that led to the denial of tickets for them because of the electoral alliance with the Janasena.

Pawan Kalyan after a short meeting with JSP leaders of Godavari districts on Sunday evening, left for Hyderabad, leaving the appeasement process to Political Affairs Committee chairman Nadendla Manohar and other leaders.

RAJYA SABHA POLLS

4 independents hold key to JDS' near-impossible win

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

WITH the Lok Sabha elections likely to be announced soon, the Rajya Sabha elections on February 27 could be a perceptional advantage for either the JDS-BJP combine or Congress.

A win could mean that JDS-BJP can pull off the impossible, while a defeat would lead to the perception that they got it wrong the second time in a row.

If one looks at the numbers in the state legislature, JDS has just 19 MLAs, but is trying to get its candidate Kupendra Reddy elected with 45 votes. He may get 21 votes from BJP, but he will still reach only 40 votes. To touch the magical figure of 45, he will need votes of four independent MLAs and also a Congress MLA to cross vote for them.

If that does not happen, it will be a second setback for the regional party. In the Legislative Council election just over a week ago, JDS-BJP candidate Ranganath lost to Congress' Puttanna. This was the seat Congress had humiliatingly lost in the previous election by getting just around 700 votes. If BJP-JDS lose the RS election too, it will be hard for the two parties to enthuse their joint-cadres, said political analyst BS Murthy.

Sources said JDS got Reddy, who is one of the richest politicians in the state, to contest the election to use his money power to win.

G Janardhan Reddy; Latha Mallikarjun; Dharshan Puttanaiah; Puttaswamy Gowda

> **This was the seat Cong humiliatingly lost in the previous election with just around 700 votes. If BJP-JDS lose the RS polls too, it will be hard for the parties to enthuse their cadres,**
>
> BS Murthy, political analyst

But Murthy pointed out that it may not be possible as the Congress government is still young, completing only eight months til now. If it was the fag end of this government, it would have been a different story, he added.

The independents have won peddling a narrative and if they switch sides, it will be difficult for them to explain it to their constituents. Puttaswamy Gowda, MLA from Gauribidanur, won as a Congress rebel and is seeking to get the Mandya ticket for himself.

His son-in-law Sharath Bache Gowda is Congress MLA and Keonics chairman. The other MLA from Melkote Darshan Puttannaiah, a farmer leader, was supported by Congress and his major rival was JDS. Latha Mallikarjun from Harapanahalli is already a Congress associate member.

For Kupendra Reddy, the trump card is MLA Janardhan Reddy, who has not only agreed to support him but also has been soliciting support for him. Janardhan Reddy had a sour relationship with JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy, but all that is past now, the sources said.

The four independents hold all the aces as all parties want them on their side. While BJP-JDS and Congress MLAs have to show their ballot papers to their respective party officials, independents need not do it, making it impossible to know who they voted for. The polls on Tuesday are headed for a nail-biting finish.

Congman likens JDS-BJP contesting polls to 'wife swapping', triggers row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

KPCC spokesperson M Lakshmana on Sunday courted controversy by taking a veiled jibe at the BJP and JDS alliance and seat sharing, saying that the two parties are swapping their candidates akin to wife-swapping.

Speaking to media persons at Congress Bhavan on Sunday, Lakshmana said two years ago during the BJP government, the police had busted a wife-swapping racket in Bengaluru. "Wife-swapping means exchange of wives between married couples for a few hours. It was big news after police cracked the network in Bengaluru. Now, the media is terming the seat-sharing between the BJP and JDS as swapping. It was reported in the media that Mandya, Hassan and Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha seats were given to JDS, and in Kolar and Tumakuru constituencies, the parties are swapping candidates. In Kolar, the JDS candidate will contest on the BJP symbol and in Tumakuru, the BJP candidate will contest on the JDS symbol. This is called swapping. Even swapping is being planned for the Mysuru Lok Sabha segment," he said.

Lakshmana said through the new system of swapping candidates, the BJP has planned to completely destroy the JDS.

Reacting to the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill's defeat in the Upper House, Lakshmana said the BJP is spreading misinformation on the bill.

"Through the bill, a part of the money from the rich Hindu temples which comes under A grade list will be given to C grade Hindu temples which have revenue of less than one lakh. The bill also suggested health insurance for the priests, Rs 2 lakh compensation to the family members during untimely death of the priests and also infrastructure development of temples," he said.

BIKER'S HIGH

Bike racers from various countries participate in the CEAT Indian Supercross Bike Racing League in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

Kavitha says not possible to appear before CBI today

HYDERABAD: Kalvakuntla Kavitha, BRS MLC and daughter of former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, in a letter to the CBI said on Sunday that it was not possible for her to appear before the probe agency on Monday due to 'pressing onerous engagements'. She asked the CBI to put the notice in abeyance. Recently, CBI issued a notice to Kavitha to appear before it on Monday in connection with Delhi liquor scam. Responding to the notice, Kavitha wanted the CBI to withdraw notices issued to her under Section 41A of CrPC. "I may request you to revoke or withdraw the notice as it appears to be sent by invoking Section 41A CrPC while not being aware or conscious of the earlier notice sent under Section 160 of CrPC," Kavitha said in her letter to the CBI.

The commemorative stamp being released in Mangaluru on Sunday

Yakshagana stamp to promote art

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mangaluru

THE Department of Posts in association with Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) released a commemorative postage stamp on the theme of traditional art form Yakshagana in Mangaluru on Sunday.

Chief postmaster general, Karnataka Circle, S Rajendra Kumar released the stamp with a face value of Rs 5. Dakshina Kannada MP Nalin Kumar Kateel who presided over the programme said that the stamp released by India Posts on Yakshagana will help promote traditional arts across the globe.

"It is a memorable day in the history of Yakshagana. A traditional art of coastal Karnataka has received fitting acknowledgement through postal stamps. We will put our efforts in coming up with a postal stamp on Shivarama Karanth and Daivaradhane," he said.

Mangaluru South MLA Vedavyas Kamath said that Yakshagana is getting recognised at the national level. Yakshagana scholar Dr Prabhakar Joshi said that the postal stamp has become a brand ambassador for Yakshagana.

"Postal stamps will help us promote our traditional art forms in other regions. It is a proud moment for all of us," he said.

Blame Cong for Mahadayi project setback: Bommai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hubballi

FORMER chief minister and BJP leader Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday held Congress responsible for the setback in the Mahadayi project and alleged that the party choosing to go before the tribunal delayed the project by 8-10 years.

He told reporters that it was not necessary to move the tribunal, which was constituted when Congress Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh was in power. This was the biggest mistake by Congress, he added.

Congress gave in writing to the tribunal and that walled off the project. That party is infamous for creating such walls in drinking water projects. While BJP built the canal, Congress built the wall. Congress was opposing the project whenever it was in power in Goa. But the permission for a detailed project report was given when BJP was ruling Goa.

Now, the project is stuck awaiting environmental clearances. The ministry has sought some documents, which should be provided by the state government. If that is done, state BJP will put pressure on the Union government to okay the project. Congress had called for tenders without permission from the environmental department. That is the reason the Goa government has moved the Supreme Court, he added.

He urged the state government to argue effectively in court regarding Krishna, Mahadayi and Mekedatu projects. There was a tribunal order related to the Krishna project in 2010, but Congress never filed the challenge petition. It went behind Maharashtra, which had filed the writ petition.

To allegations that Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and Basavaraj Bommai are misleading people, Bommai said people know who is telling the truth. Are Congress leaders Satya Harishchandras, he asked.

League relinquishes 3rd seat demand for Rajya Sabha slot

Kochi: After striking an aggressive posture, under pressure from its rank and file, the IUML on Sunday reportedly toned down its demand for a third seat in the upcoming general elections, instead telling the Congress that an extra Rajya Sabha seat would suffice. The Congress leadership, at a bilateral meeting, convinced League leaders of its inability to part with a LS seat. However, they agreed to accommodate the IUML's demand for RS seat.

Murder accused, out of prison, murdered by gang in Anekal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 27-year-old man, who had previously faced murder charges and was recently released from prison, was brutally murdered by unidentified miscreants near Anekal in the wee hours of Sunday.

The attack took place around 4 am, about 100m from the victim Vijay Kumar's residence in Marsur village, Anekal.

Bengaluru Rural SP, Mallikarjun Baladandi said, "The victim, along with Yeshwanth, was involved in the murder case of their friend Manoj in 2017. Kumar was in jail till July 2023."

He added that preliminary investigations indicated that Manoj's brother, Arjun, had planned the murder.

The police said that Vijay was lured out of his home by an unknown person under the pretense of urgency and was attacked minutes later. It is suspected that more than three assailants attacked Kumar with machetes.

PARTIALLY BURNT REMAINS OF MISSING STUDENT FOUND

Bengaluru: A BTech student, who had been missing for three days, was found murdered in an eucalyptus grove at Kalenahalli in Anekal, on Sunday. The deceased, Harshith was from Uttarakhand, and was studying at a private college. Police said he had not attended classes since February 22 and his classmates lodged a missing persons complaint. Police found his partially burnt body along with his belongings, on Sunday. The police have registered a case of murder.

The police added that despite maintaining a low-profile, and refraining from criminal activities, Kumar's involvement in Manoj's murder raises suspicions about the motive behind his murder.

The police are probing the case from all angles, including the possibility of motives beyond old rivalry. The Anekal police have registered a case and are yet to arrest the accused.

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Information Technology Department
Central Office: 763, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600002
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Anekal 080-27830505 **FEDGL0088**0004172, 0004185 **Arakalgud** 08175-220780 **FEDGL0036**0010865, 0010880, 0010893, 0010901, 0010917, 0010919, 0010929, 0010930, 0010934, 0010948, 0010952, 0010955, 0010956 **Arasikere** 08174-299941 **FEDGL0414**0004172, 0004233, 0002587, 0002605, 0002609, 0002614, 0002616, 0002632, 0002661, 0003719, 0003992, 0004229 **B H Road** 8162277793 **FEDGL0103**0015002, 0010950, 0014921, 0015019, 0014974, 0015028, 0010853, 0010929, 0013613, 0013682, 0013697, 0012219, 0012354, 0014497, 0014757, 0014973, 0015029, **FEDBD0103**0000011, 0000012 **BASAVESHWARA NAGAR** 080 41900282 **FEDGL0011**0010721, 0010733, 0010743, 0010751, 0010760, 0011737 **BELGAUM** 0831 4201487 **FEDGL0136**0006540, 0005160, 0005123, 0005134, 0005137, 0005146, 0005153, 0005175, 0005177, 0005199, 0005202, 0005213, 0006406, 0006701 **BELUR** 08177 222100 **FEDGL0159**0009558, 0009570, 0009578, 0009583, 0009586, 0009592, 0009599, 0009603, 0009605, 0009613, 0009614, 0009615, 0009619, 0009621, 0011205 **BOMMANAHALLI** 080 41500417 **FEDGL0014**0007785, 0007801, 0007758, 0007759, 0007799, 0007974, 0007962 **BTM LAYOUT** 080-41312231 **FEDGL0003**0005897, 0005910, 0005914, 0005915, 0005916, 0005922, 0005943, 0005946, 0006568, **FEDBD0003**0000029 **BYADGI** 8375229022 **FEDGL0051**0011947, 0009948, 0009949, 0009957, 0009962, 0009969, 0009971, 0009980, 0009994, 0009999, 0010005, 0010008, 0011946 **Caltex Circle** 8162277972 **FEDGL0102**0013310, 0010084, 0010103, 0010105, 0010138, 0010145, 0010151, 0010152, 0010179, 0010184, 0010200, 0010218, 0011122, 0011169, 0012188, 0012262, 0013113 **Car Street Bellary** 8392276005 **FEDGL0092**0004544, 0003540, 0003572, 0003584, 0003594, 0003798 **CHANNAPATNA** 080 27256046 **FEDGL0176**0018419, 0018444, 0018447, 0018454, 0018455, 0018456, 0018996, 0019577, 0019581 **CHENRAYAPATNA** 08176 252477 **FEDGL0158**0023072, 0020793, 0020802, 0020826, 0020842, 0020863, 0020867, 0020868, 0022440, 0022449, 0022455, 0022481, 0022139, 0022861, 0022883, 0022917 **CHIKKAMAGALUR** 08262 228286 **FEDGL0021**0007111, 0007117, 0007119, 0007130, 0007142, 0007144, 0007145 **DAVANGERE** 08192-252111 **FEDGL0229**0008969, 0008971, 0008972, 0008988, 0009010, 0009595, 0009625, 0009846, 0009865 **dharwad** 0836 -2970229 **FEDGL0233**0005374, 0005378, 0005387, **FEDBD0233**0000006 **Gadag** 08372-200075 **FEDGL0420**0002714, 0002723, 0002767, 0002782, 0002783, 0002785, 0002809, 0002813, 0004110, 0004111 **Gangavathi** 8533234018 **FEDGL0094**0004548, 0004552, 0004569, 0004572, 0004585, 0004586 **Gubbi** 8131222850 **FEDGL0046**0011456, 0011462, 0011467, 0011477, 0011481, 0011486, 0011539, 0011540, 0011541, 0011543, 0011554, 0011562, 0011564, 0011568, 0011569, 0011580, 0011583, 0013965 **Gundalpete** 08229-295128 **FEDGL0383**0002672, 0003727 **H D Kote** 08228-297033 **FEDGL0058**0008246, 0008287, 0008289, 0008306, 0008317, 0009419 **Hagaribommanhalli** 08397-239003 **FEDGL0100**0010814, 0008553, 0008564, 0008565, 0008576, 0008577, 0008579, 0008601, 0008610, 0008611, 0008617, 0008619, 0008620, 0008638, 0009316, 0010104, 0010110, 0009595 **HANSUR** 08222 250114 **FEDGL0162**0016096, 0016099, 0016110, 0016121, 0016130, 0017058, 0017095, 0017100, 0017533 **Harappanahalli** 8398281429 **FEDGL0104**0008570, 0008576, 0008581, 0008607, 0008630, 0009782 **HARIHAR** 08192-242865 **FEDGL0022**0013497, 0013503, 0013520, 0013529, 0013540, 0013542, 0013545, 0013555, 0013557, **FEDBD0022**0000010 **HASSAN MARKET** 08172 235324 **FEDGL0157**0011772, 0011798, 0011800, 0011818, 0011827, 0011858, 0011862, 0011864, 0011866 **HAVERI** 8375232810 **FEDGL0181**0009920, 0009936, 0009941, 0009947, 0009952 **Holenarsipura** 08175-273733 **FEDGL0059**0019382, 0019389, 0019390, 0019397, 0019448, 0019454, 0019461, 0019464, 0019466, 0019467, 0019475, 0019479, 0019487, 0019515, 0021703, 0021795 **HOSA ROAD** 080-257444811 **FEDGL0002**0013833, 0012400, 0011754, 0011755, 0013180, 0013198, 0013246, 0013805, 0014554, **FEDBD0002**0000149 **Hosadurga** 8199200023 **FEDGL0412**0003139, 0003148, 0003152 **Hospet** 08394-226899 **FEDGL0099**0008552, 0006809, 0006861, 0006881, 0006894, 0008015, **FEDBD0099**0000109 **JEEVAN BHEEMA NAGAR** 080 41900283 **FEDGL0019**0003151, 0003152, 0003591, 0003592 **K R NAGAR** 08223 262045 **FEDGL0161**0011123, 0011175, 0011176, 0011189, 0011215, 0012276, 0012325 **K R Pete** 08230-262886 **FEDGL0063**0007054, 0007073, 0007074, 0007080, 0007081, 0007092, 0007103, 0007104, 0007115, 0007120, 0007127, 0007132, 0008105, 0008110 **K R PURAM** 080 25610669 **FEDGL0012**0013578, 0013572, 0012063, 0012077, 0012094, 0012104, 0012113, 0012121, 0012612, 0013073, 0013139, 0013586, 0012692, 0013104, 0013654 **K R ROAD** 8192272223 **FEDGL0037**0005353, 0005365, 0005368, 0005371, 0005374, 0005375, 0005382, 0005386, 0005387, 0005392, 0005394, 0005404, 0005408 **Kadur** 08267-200280 **FEDGL0487**0003623, 0003624, 0003651, 0002120, 0002131, 0002141, 0002155, 0002159, 0002163, 0002167, 0002180, 0002199, 0002203, 0002207, 0002865, 0003575, 0003619 **KAMMANAHALLI** 080 40926572 **FEDGL0005**0004204, 0004222 **Kampli** 08394-250822 **FEDGL0095**0008448, 0008485, 0008501, 0006850, 0006859, 0006863, 0006867, 0006876, 0006882, 0006885, 0006896, 0006903, 0006906, 0006908, 0006912, 0008447, 0008484, 0008500 **Kappogal Road Bellary** 08392-255005 **FEDGL0093**0004916, 0004924, 0003801, 0003811, 0003820, 0003841, 0003852, 0003853, 0004915, 0004923 **KOPIKAR ROAD** 8362362444 **FEDGL0155**0007296, 0007299, 0007308, 0007335, 0007340, 0007979, 0008350 **Koppal** 8539200090 **FEDGL0403**0002861, 0001679, 0001681, 0001692, 0001695, 0001703, 0001712, 0001730, 0001731, 0002117, 0002837, 0002890, 0002919 **Kudligi** 08391-299920 **FEDGL0404**0005572, 0005531, 0003034, 0003035, 0003037, 0003040, 0003041, 0003042, 0003047, 0003058, 0003062, 0003068, 0003070, 0003073, 0003076, 0003086, 0003089, 0003093, 0003106, 0003110, 0003116, 0003119, 0003120, 0003127, 0003132, 0004752, 0005587, 0004631, 0005463, **FEDBD0404**0000114, 0000118 **KUnigal**08162-220155 **FEDGL0121**0010052, 0007442, 0007451, 0007456, 0007463, 0007464, 0007476, 0007522, 0009876 **Laxmeshwara** 8487200005 **FEDGL0407**0001320, 0001328, 0001336, 0001338, 0001341 **Madhugiri** 8137200547 **FEDGL0393**0007235, 0007274, 0007161, 0004070, 0004099, 0004116, 0004176, 0005196, 0006203, 0005477, 0007160, 0007257, 0007314 **Malavalli** 08321-244588 **FEDGL0365**0004134, 0004141, 0004166, 0004203, 0004209, 0004210, 0005290 **Malebennur** 08192-299566 **FEDGL0062**0010395, 0010421, 0010422, 0010423, 0010424, 0010425, 0010448, 0010454, 0010951, 0010990, 0011019, 0011628, 0012023, 0012039 **MANDIMOHALLA** 8214264270 **FEDGL0174**0010198, 0008747, 0009873 **MANDYA** 08232 239585 **FEDGL0163**0007603, 0007620 **Mundargi** 08371-295011 **FEDGL0064**0007329, 0007336, 0007353, 0007395, 0007402, 0007403, 0007405, 0007417, 0008712 **Nagarbhavi** 8023356022 **FEDGL0031**0006320, 0005127, 0005144, 0005150, 0006298, 0006566 **NANJANGODE** 08221 223326 **FEDGL0160**0012677, 0012682, 0012684, 0012722, 0012728, 0012730, 0012734, 0012739, 0012742 **Nelamangala** 08029911005 **FEDGL0392**0001806, 0001807, 0002317, 0002688, 0002730 **Pavagada** 08136-295608 **FEDGL0377**0006197, 0006199, 0006205, 0006218, 0006245, 0006246, 0006249, 0006257, 0006259, 0006272, 0006278, 0006279, 0006280, 0006308, 0006331, 0006336, 0009181 **Periapatna** 08223-297589 **FEDGL0044**0009463, 0009510, 0007380, 0007382, 0007393, 0007416, 0007421, 0007443, 0007467, 0007468, 0007471, 0009482, 0009462, 0009509 **RAJAJI NAGAR** 080 41902910 **FEDGL0004**0004022, 0004527 **Ramamurthy Nagar** 8041225616 **FEDGL0035**0002643, 0002060, 0002067, 0002068, 0002445, 0002705 **RAMANAGARA** 080 27275627 **FEDGL0180**0024285, 0024214, 0021092, 0021132, 0021155, 0021161, 0021162, 0021189, 0021225, 0021242, 0021257, 0021268, 0021275, 0023231, 0023240, 0023247, 0023341, 0023376, 0023380, 0024190, 0024068, 0024185, **FEDDS0180**0000116, 0000117, 0000118, 0000119 **RAMASWAMY CIRCLE** 8214253754 **FEDGL0173**0006825, 0006829, 0007292, 0007301 **RANEBENNUR** 08373 - 297397 **FEDGL0232**0009891, 0009901, 0009902, 0009906, 0009910, 0009911, 0009912, 0009918, 0009939, 0009960, 0009973, 0009981, 0010893, 0010902, 0010907, 0010977 **SHIMOGA** 081 23115765 **FEDGL0183**0010036, 0010047, 0010051, 0010059, 0010062, 0010076, 0010077, 0010078, 0010086, 0010099, 0011323 **Sindhanur** 08535-200110, 8880890891 **FEDGL0461**0003191, 0001755, 0001759, 0001762, 0001763, 0001764, 0001765, 0001767, 0001776, 0001786, 0001805, 0001808, 0001812, 0001815, 0001819, 0001820, 0001821, 0002752, 0003190 **Sira** 08135-295620 **FEDGL0376**0009248, 0005918, 0005938, 0005976, 0005977, 0005987, 0005991, 0005997, 0005999, 0006003, 0006042, 0006043, 0006055, 0008685 **SIRSI** 08384-223365 **FEDGL0193**0006879, 0006881, 0006882, 0006884, 0006887, 0006888, 0006889, 0006891, 0006899, 0006904, 0006905 **Srinivasa Nagar** 080-26693369 **FEDGL0089**0004480, 0004482, 0004738 **SULTHANPLYA** 080 41636281 **FEDGL0013**0004915, 0004948, 0004953, 0005233 **Tarikere** 08261-200233 **FEDGL0415**0002225, 0002240, 0002241, 0002258, 0002277, 0002280, 0002283, 0002292, 0002293 **Tiptur** 8134252402 **FEDGL0047**0009765, 0008147, 0008158, 0008160, 0008166, 0008167, 0008189, 0008205, 0008215, 0008221, 0008682, 0009723, 0009764 **Turuvekere** 8139295735 **FEDGL0386**0003871, 0003877, 0003884, 0003888, 0003903, 0003918, 0003923, 0003931, 0003932, 0003947, 0003948 **Yeshwantpur** 8041225684 **FEDGL0034**0006024, 0004315, 0004324, 0004328, 0004353, 0006009

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Dated : 26-02-2024
Place : Karnataka

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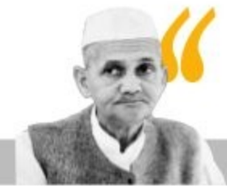

India will have to hang down her head in shame if even one person is left who is said in any way to be untouchable

Lal Bahadur Shastri

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

PUTIN BETTER PLACED ON SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF UKRAINE WAR

WEARY Ukrainians marked the second anniversary of the Russian invasion on their soil on February 24 wondering if normalcy would ever return. And whenever it does, what would be left of the country that has been reduced to an infrastructure rubble amid humongous loss of human life in the proxy war between superpowers on their land. If the dramatic Ukrainian pushback against the Russian military headlined the first anniversary, the second saw the enemy's ingress in the east and its sharp attacks in the south. Flanked by Western leaders in a show of solidarity, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the war can end only on his country's own terms. What he left unsaid was that the West would have a say at the negotiating table. Forcing a full retreat of the invading forces might not be doable as things stand. A counterattack against Russian forces in 2023 that was billed as a game-changer managed to produce only limited gains. It shocked Western donors and ended up in Zelenskyy sacking his otherwise able head of the armed forces, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi. The sacked General is now being seen as his political rival. If Zelenskyy was hailed as the David who gave the Goliath, Russian President Vladimir Putin, a bloody nose in the first year, the halo has since dissipated. With aid dwindling and soldiers lacking adequate firepower, the forward line appears to be wilting. War fatigue is setting in but people haven't given up their territorial fight yet. However, a recent survey suggested that a whopping 72 percent of Ukrainians want Zelenskyy to open peace talks with Putin.

As for Putin, he appears to have managed the situation fairly well by internalising the economy to insulate it from Western sanctions and putting the wealth of oligarchs to national use. Indian foreign minister S Jaishankar had recently faulted the West for slamming almost all doors on Putin, forcing him into a China embrace. No wonder, Russia's trade with China last year crossed $200 billion. But Jaishankar was confident that Moscow would not fully pitch its tent in Beijing as the former has an enormous tradition of statecraft.

A sizable chunk of war funds for Ukraine are already stuck in the US amid Republican roadblocks. Donald Trump is against bankrolling the war. His position is that funds can be released only as loan. It could be advantage Putin if Trump gets a repeat mandate at the White House.

TN BUDGET HAMSTRUNG BY RESOURCE CRUNCH

TAMIL Nadu's 2024-25 budget, unveiled just months ahead of the Lok Sabha election, could be seen as living up to Chief Minister M K Stalin's definition of the Dravidian model of governance: "everything for everyone". The budget does appear to offer everything to every marginalised group, with a focus on education. The new Tamizh Pudhalvan scheme at a cost of ₹360 crore hopes to replicate the success of the Pudhumai Penn initiative targeted at improving enrolment of girls in higher education with incentives by offering boys who studied in government schools from Class 6-10 a monthly aid of ₹1,000 to enrol and complete their higher education. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of boys is less than that of girls in TN. Similarly, the government announced a scheme to realise a hut-free Tamil Nadu at a cost of ₹3,500 crore by building 8 lakh houses in rural parts of the state. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister's breakfast scheme for government school students of Classes 1-5 will be expanded to include students of government aided schools as well. The government also said that education costs of transgender persons would be borne by the state and the scheme providing free bus services to women, trans persons, and persons with disabilities will be expanded to cover hilly regions as well. On the other hand, the state also announced payroll subsidies to global capability centres employing persons at high salaries and to incentivise new firms to employ women, trans persons, and disabled persons. However, allocations for key sectors such as health and education appear to have stagnated at a time when both are crying for investment.

With the revenue deficit reaching ₹44,907 crore in the revised estimates for 2023-24 against the ₹37,540 crore in the Budget estimates and expected to rise to ₹49,279 crore in 2024-25, the government has clearly sought to woo the youth and marginalised amid its constraints. However, there are concerns that this may have come at the cost of capital expenditure which was reduced to ₹42,532 crore in revised estimates for 2023-24 from ₹44,366 crore in the budget estimates. Further, the limited transparency in detailing how government funds reach the most marginalised in the state, evidenced by its opaque gender budget statement, needs to be redressed.

QUICK TAKE

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN INMATES

NEW data from the National Crime Records Bureau say there were 275 rapes in custody between 2017 and 2022, with Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh reporting almost half of them. Though the numbers have come down over the years, it is still disturbingly high. The bigger worry is that it is more difficult for the incarcerated to file a rape case. The accused usually are the police, jail staff, members of the armed forces, and workers at remand homes and hospitals. Specialised medical counselling and a helpline that assures anonymity will go some way in making reporting and rehabilitation easier.

While the state's uniform civil code has been touted as a step towards gender justice, some of its provisions take away the rights of women secured over decades

UTTARAKHAND CODE STUMBLES ON GENDER JUSTICE

FLAVIA AGNES

Women's rights lawyer and founder of Majlis Legal Centre

SOURAV ROY

UTTARAKHAND has become the first state to enact a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) under Article 44 of the Constitution. It unifies family laws concerning marriage and divorce, restitution of conjugal rights, judicial separation, nullity of marriage and divorce, maintenance, alimony and custody, intestate and testamentary succession, and live-in relationships. While the state's UCC has been touted as a step towards achieving gender justice, to what extent it fulfills this aspiration needs to be carefully examined.

The requirement that live-in relationships be registered has triggered heated public debates. The code entered a new terrain by introducing provisions that formalise what had hitherto been in the realm of informal sexual relationships between consenting adults and raises concerns about the privacy of individuals and their liberty.

The code requires partners to notify the registrar within a month of entering into a live-in relationship and also while terminating it. One fails to understand the purpose for which the provision of registering a live-in relationship has been included in the UCC. Similar to marriage (and divorce) one has to register the contract with the registrar at the time of entering into a relationship and also at the time of exiting from it. Non-registration has been made a criminal offence that carries a fine of ₹10,000 and/or imprisonment of three months. In case of failing to produce a certificate of live-in relationship, a term of six months is prescribed on conviction and / or a fine of ₹25,000. This defeats the very purpose of a live-in relationship as it renders it on par with marriage, with the stipulations for entering into such a relationship similar to that of a marriage contract. The purpose seems to be to dissuade young couples from entering into such relationships and control their sexuality while infringing on their privacy and liberty.

The code defines this heterosexual relationship as a "relationship between a man and a woman" who "cohabit in a shared household through a relationship like marriage, provided that such relations are not prohibited." Interestingly there is a glaring silence about the rights of queer and transgender persons within a family and the rights of transgender and same-sex persons to marry.

What is shocking is that the law applies even to even those residents of the state living outside Uttarakhand, in addition to applying to all those who do not have a domicile in the state.

While the law has been praised for bringing curtains on certain provisions in the Muslim law perceived as "defective" such as unequal inheritance, polygamy, *iddat* and the practice of *nikah halala* (by which a person can only remarry his divorced spouse after she has married someone else, consummated the marriage and thereafter obtained a divorce), ironically it has not incorporated some of the positive and progressive aspects of the Muslim law such as the compulsory payment of *mehr* by the husband to the wife which provides financial security of the wife, *nikahnama* (marriage contract) which allows for the spouses to add mutually acceptable and legally binding conditions, and a restraint on willing away more than 1/3rd of property. Had the intention been genuinely to bring about gender justice, such provisions would have been extended to the women of all communities.

Also, the personal laws of Christian, Parsi and other religious communities have become legally untenable in the state. This has been done without any consultations with these communities.

A critical aspect of any law is that every stakeholder should be able to or should have the space to access the law. In the prevailing political climate, it will be difficult for women from minority communities to access any uniform law, howsoever progressive it is said to be, when its basic objective is to show one-upmanship over minorities, especially Muslims.

The discrimination that Hindu women face in the family, and which stands unaddressed in the various family laws prevalent in the country, either in religious-based personal laws or the Special Marriage Act have not been addressed. For instance, it has retained restitution of conjugal rights as a matrimonial remedy even though its constitutional validity has been challenged in the Supreme Court. This is a regressive provision with colonial origin, that legally compels unwilling spouses to live together in the name of conjugality. Though apparently gender-neutral, it has grave implications for the wife as it may result in rape or forcible pregnancy.

The provision of compulsory registration of marriage has been opposed by women's groups as it will defeat the rights of women whose marriage is not registered. The prevailing norm of presumption of marriage in cases of long-term cohabitation serves women better when a marriage is challenged in court.

The law has taken away several fundamental rights of women that have been secured after sustained struggle over many decades such as the right to reside in the matrimonial home, the right to live in dignity, the right to livelihood, the right to freedom of speech and expression, right to freely profess, practice and propagate one's religion etc.

Regarding succession and inheritance, it has taken away the difference between coparcenery and separate property and granted equal rights to men and women. Superficially, it appears to be gender equal. But on deeper scrutiny, it has taken away the rights that the Hindu women had gained after the amendment to the Hindu Succession Act in 2005 (HSAA 2005). The HSAA 2005 granted equal rights in coparcenary property by birth which could not be willed away so women had certain protection. But the Uttarakhand UCC has taken away this protection and now all property can be willed away. Given the bias against endowing daughters with property, even the limited protection they had is now lost. The right way forward would have been for the code to restrict testamentary rights on a part of the property so that daughters would inherit at least something.

(Views are personal)

FINDING RELIEF AFTER LOSS OF ONE'S ONLY CHILD

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

HOW can parents cope with the loss of their only beloved child? The crux of this story, which affords elbow room for a modern storyteller, is a parable told by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836-1886). It is the story of a father and daughter who lived near the village of Kamarpukur in West Bengal. Kamarpukur is the birthplace of Ramakrishna. There is a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission there and a lake, once called Ranjit Raya's Lake. After he narrated this brief, supernatural parable, Ramakrishna reportedly said, "Even Naren (Swami Vivekananda) believes in these things now".

Ranjit Raya was a rich landlord, helped in life by his sweet-natured wife. If he had one sorrow, it was that he had no children. He was a devout man and began to pray and perform charities in the name of Goddess Durga. Eventually, he was blessed with a beautiful baby daughter. Her face shone with celestial lustre, as did her eyes. Nobody had seen such large, bright eyes on a baby. Raya and his wife Mrinmoyee were convinced that the Goddess herself had manifested as their daughter. In gratitude, they called their daughter 'Devi'.

The little one was greatly attached to her father. She would not sleep at night unless her father put her on his shoulder and walked up and down, crooning to her. Six years went by. Devi grew quite independent and often went into the garden to play by herself. But at the given hour she ran to the gate to watch for her father's horse-carriage. It became the practice that Devi would clamber into her father's arms to finish the drive to the house.

One day, Raya sat in his office room downstairs casting his annual accounts with his clerk. Devi suddenly ran into the room to be near him. Seeing him preoccupied, she began to explore around her. She picked up a glass paperweight, then the inkwell, and the blotter, and the desk clock, and kept interrupting Raya to ask, "Father, what is this? What is this?" Raya tried at first to tell her nicely to stop disturbing him, but Devi persisted. Finally, he said distractedly, "Just go away".

Devi was so shocked by this that she ran straight out of the gate. She approached a peddler of *shankh* or conch-shell objects who was passing by and asked for a couple of conch bangles for her tiny wrists. "That will be two coppers," said the peddler.

"See my house there? There are two coppers in the little wooden box near my bed. Ask them for it," said Devi.

Such was her charm that the peddler just nodded and went on. However, there was uproar in the house when he went to ask for money. They found the coins exactly where Devi had said but could not find her. A band of villagers arrived just then and told Raya that Devi had fallen into the lake. A little arm with conch bangles on it had flashed above the water and gone under. It had happened so fast that nobody could save her.

PEXELS

After his daughter Devi's death, Ranjit Raya helped the villagers educate their daughters, thereby giving the poor girls of the village some of the benefits he would have given to his daughter. By doing so, Devi attained a long life in the hearts of people

Ranjit Raya and his wife were devastated. But whereas grieving Mrinmoyee could distract herself with running the big household, nothing could make Raya feel better. "Why was I not more patient? Why did I tell her to go?" he lashed himself bitterly. Months passed and Ranjit Raya felt no better. He had been a dutiful son, husband, father and landlord. Why, then, was he punished so severely?

Finally, Mrinmoyee approached him gently "She is the One who came to us as our child. Ask Her why this happened," she said. Raya gave a mighty start at that. Lost in grief, he had forgotten about the One he considered the cause of things. The next morning, he began by chanting the Goddess's name to steady his nerves. When he felt more stable, he asked the Goddess, "What did I do wrong, Mother? Why was my child suddenly taken from me?" There was no answer but Raya felt a little lighter in his mind. Surely, She would answer him?

One night, Raya dreamt that the Goddess appeared to him in full splendour and said lovingly, "Son, why are you upset with me? You know I am Mahamaya, the great illusionist. Devi finished her karma on earth and left. It is as simple and final as that. But look around you, son. You are responsible for so many little Devis. They need your help."

"How can I help them, Mother," said Raya in his dream.

"Son, how do you see me?"

"As Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Durga, Mother," replied Raya.

"What does that mean in daily life?"

"Knowledge, good fortune and strength, Mother," he said.

"Then you know what to do, son," said the Goddess with a tender smile.

Raya woke up with a sense of excitement. He paced up and down, making plans all night. Next morning, he went from house to house on his estate, persuading each family to let their daughters study reading, writing and arithmetic, at least for a couple of years each. Taken aback and touched, the villagers agreed. Mrinmoyee herself taught the girls. In this manner, Raya tried to give the poor girls of his village some of the benefits he would have given his daughter. But even ten years later, when his carriage entered the gates, his eyes would mist thinking of the little figure that would come running to be picked up.

However, the villagers gave him a gift. "Your daughter was none other than the Goddess born to you. You have helped our daughters in her name. We will hold a fair each year by the lake to remember Devi on the day she vanished," they declared.

And so, a tradition was born at Kamarpukur that comforted Raya and his wife somewhat that Devi had attained a long life in the hearts of their people.

(Views are personal)

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MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Bold assumption

Ref: *The hype and reality of 400 seats for NDA* (Feb 25). Never before has a ruling political party or a sitting prime minister made such proclamations of winning 400 seats even before the election commission has announced the election date. Even more strange is the prime minister asking the ministers to come up with a roadmap for the next five years. This level of confidence is despite setbacks like the Chhattisgarh mayoral election fiasco, and the electoral bond verdict.

Buddha Jagdish Rao, Visakhapatnam

Tall claim

There appears to be no wave in favour of or against any political party or alliance at the national level. The prime minister's claim that the BJP will win as many as 370 seats shows the level of overconfidence. It remains to be seen if Modi's mantra of Viksit Bharat has struck a chord with the masses.

David Milton, Maruthancode

Farmers' stir

Ref: *Why this farm stir demands a different approach on MSP* (Feb 25). There seems to be no end in sight to the farmers' stir. While the Centre has offered a few concessions such as offering guaranteed MSP for select crops, the farmers are sticking to their demands. While our sympathies are with the farmers' plight and wish to see their reasonable demands fulfilled, it is imperative that show some flexibility or risk losing public support.

R Sriramprasad, email

Election test

Instead of marching to the national capital amid the winter chill and battling with the police, the farmers should put their demands in public and support whichever political party promises to fulfill their demands. If the party that supports their demands is defeated by the public, then they should pause all agitations for the next five years.

N Balakrishnan, Chennai

Inspiring column

Ref: *The art of giving less while seeming to share more* (Feb 24). I agree that the Centre's allocation of funds to the states has shrunk. The column added fuel to the spark in me to study law at one of the top law schools in India and become a civil judge or a prominent advocate so that I can raise my voice more strongly against such discriminations.

Sasi Preetham, email

Shun arrogance

Ref: *Priest attempting to halt racing on church ground hit by cars* (Feb 25). The incident highlights the arrogance of today's youngsters. We must make collective efforts to guide our youth on the right path.

C M Umanath, Kozhikode

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Jagat Prakash Nadda @JPNadda
Under the 'double-engine' government, Chhattisgarh is again moving on the path of progress at a rapid pace. The trust of the people has been confirmed on 'Modi's Guarantee'

P Chidambaram @PChidambaram_IN
The fact that over 43 lakh youth are unemployed and competed for 60,400 posts tells the story of Uttar Pradesh ruled by the BJP.

Arvind Kejriwal @ArvindKejriwal
India alliance will win all the seven seats of Delhi. The one who gives relief is greater than the one who kills.

No region left out of 'nari shakti', says Modi

PM halts his radio broadcast Mann Ki Baat for three months in view of LS polls, urges yougsters to vote for the country

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that there was no region in India where 'nari shakti' (women's power) has lagged. In his radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat,' the PM said women have exhibited their potential even in natural farming as much as they have done in water conservation and sanitation.

"Our 'matri-shakti' (power of motherhood) is playing a big role in saving the earth. Women are now extending natural farming in every corner of the country," he said.

On his Mann Ki Baat programme, the PM said, "It is of the people, for the people and by the people. However, following political ethics, 'Mann ki Baat' will not be broadcast for three months in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections."

Exuding confidence in coming to power for a third term, the PM said when he speaks the next time it will be the 111th episode of the radio broadcast. He urged the youth that they should not only be a part of political activities but also remain aware of discussions during the period. "You should keep in mind that your vote should be for the country," he said.

He also spoke to Kalyani Prafulla Patil from Maharashtra who has set up an example in natural farming.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks at the Ashwamedha Yagya event organised by World Gayatri Pariwar on Sunday | PTI

Saluting the spirit of several women who have set examples in various sectors, Modi said that the importance of technology has increased many times and that the country's 'Nari-Shakti' is excelling by making use of those technologies in various fields. He stressed the need for creative use of technologies for development.

The PM also spoke about the growing number of tigers in the country due to the efforts of his government. "AI-driven initiatives are being taken to reduce the man-animal conflict. In one such incident in Chandrapur district, this system helped residents of 13 villages around a tiger reserve."

Amplifying the essence of Indian culture, the PM said it meant that helping others is the highest duty. "That is why the beauty of India lies in her diversity and also in different hues of our culture," he said.

The PM urged the first-time voters to vote in record numbers for the parliamentary polls due in a few months.

Need strong families to fight drug addiction: PM

The more the youth is involved in national and global initiatives, the more they will stay away from the wrong path

Narendra Modi, PM

'Fit India'

Events like Chandrayaan mission have a transformative impact in channelling the energy of the youth in the right direction, the PM said, adding that the Fit India Movement and Khelo India will motivate the youth and "a motivated youth can't turn to substance abuse."

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A strong family support system is needed to protect the youth from drug addiction, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday.

"For building a substance-free India, it is imperative for families to be strong as an institution," he said in a video address to the 'Ashwamedha Yagya' event organised by the Gayatri Parivar. "When family members do not meet or sit together for days, then dangers rise and, therefore, families have to be strong to make the country drug-free," the PM said.

The 'Ashwamedha Yagya' has become a grand social campaign and steers millions of youths away from addiction and towards nation-building activities, he said.

Modi emphasized the need to provide support to those addicted to drug and reaffirmed the government's commitment to the nationwide initiative for a drug-free India that has engaged with more than 110 million people since its launch.

The PM said the integration of the youth with larger national and global initiatives will help them keep away from any addiction. "In national and global campaigns, the more the youth is involved, the more they will stay away from the wrong path," he said.

Speaking on the government's focus on sports and science, Modi said the success of Chandrayaan mission has sparked a new interest for technology, asserting that such events have a transformative impact in channelling the energy of the youth in the right direction.

POWER GAMES

SHAHID FARIDI

The writer is Resident Editor TNIE, New Delhi. Follow him on X@Shahid_Faridi_

Battle for UP

MPs DESERT BSP AS MAYA SHOWS NO WILL TO FIGHT

According to an old adage, the road to Delhi goes through Uttar Pradesh. As the date for the announcement of the Lok Sabha elections draws near, parties are leaving no stone unturned to win a maximum number of seats in the country's largest state. There is frenzied activity going on in the state. Alliances are being forged. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made several trips to the state in the last couple of months. Rahul Gandhi is in Uttar Pradesh leading his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. One party that appears to be gripped by inertia is the Bahujan Samaj Party. It is showing no desire to fight. The party had won 10 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 elections which it had contested in alliance with the Samajwadi Party. More than half of its MPs have already deserted the party, and most of the remaining half are also looking for better options. Its Ghazipur MP Afzal Ansari has joined the Samajwadi Party, which has fielded him from the same seat. BSP's Amroha MP Kunwar Danish Ali joined Rahul Gandhi's yatra in Amroha on Saturday. He will contest the upcoming election from Amroha as a Congress candidate. Fazlur Rehman, the BSP MP from Saharanpur, has refused to contest. The party's Ambedkar Nagar MP Ritesh Pandey has joined the BJP today. Sangeeta Azad, MP from Lalganj reserved constituency, is in talks with the BJP to join the party. She has already met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath. Jaunpur MP Shyam Singh Yadav is negotiating with both the Congress and SP. Bijnor MP Maluk Nagar is exploring the possibility of joining the BJP. Atul Rai, MP from Ghosi, is seeking an SP ticket. Shrawasti MP Shiromani Verma is talking to both the BJP and Congress for a ticket from the same seat. With such a large desertion, the BSP appears to be in a state of free fall.

CBI Raid on Satyapal Malik

LAST WORD ON J&K CORRUPTION YET TO BE SPOKEN

The CBI raid on former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satyapal Malik's premises in Delhi, Gurgaon and Baghpat in a case relating to the award of a hydel power project in J&K is set to escalate the war of words between the outspoken former Governor and the Union government. The Governor had made a sensational allegation that pressure was put upon him to clear two projects involving kickbacks of Rs 150 crore each. The CBI was asked to investigate the allegations. The investigation has turned the tables on Malik. The agency is now investigating him. Sources said both sides have enough material against each other and Malik has already threatened to spill more beans if an attempt is made to corner him. The CBI has, therefore, examined Malik only as a witness and not as an accused. According to sources, Malik, who is currently undergoing treatment for burns in a Delhi hospital, is expected to reveal some more details about the two projects and the people who were pushing them.

New 'deemed approval' provision added to avoid delay in MoRTH projects

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

TAKING note of the delays in sanctions given to various reports submitted during the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPR), the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has introduced a provision of 'deemed approval' if the officers concerned fail to clear the documents on time. However, each case of 'deemed approval' will be scrutinised and action initiated against concerned officers for the 'lapse'.

MoRTH officials said that timely approval of reports submitted by the DPR consultants is a key requirement for preparation of quality project plans. Hence the provision of 'deemed approval' has been included in the request for proposal for appointment of DPR consultants.

"Approval/comments shall be communicated by the client (MoRTH department or officer) to the consultant within the time period shown in the schedule. If no approval/comments are furnished within the indicated time period by the client, it will be considered as deemed approval," read a footnote in the request for proposal for development of national highways and Central road projects.

It was clarified that the officer concerned will take utmost care to avoid situations of 'deemed approval'.

"In case there is an instance of deemed approval, the circumstances leading to it shall be examined and appropriate action shall be taken against lapses of the concerned officer(s)," stated a circular issued by the ministry.

Surat man employed by Russian Army killed in Ukraine drone attack on Feb 21

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

TWO days after India formally acknowledged that some Indians did sign up for support jobs in the Russian army, the latest reports suggest that one man belonging to Gujarat's Surat died in a drone attack inside Ukraine.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has not commented on the incident. However, according to some reports, a 23-year-old man from Surat was killed in a drone attack in Donetsk, close to Russia-Ukraine's border, on February 21.

The Russian Army has reportedly recruited over 100 Indians as security helpers over the last year. Some of these recruits have alleged mistreatment.

Two days ago, Indian officials acknowledged that MEA is aware of these recruitments. "We are aware that a few Indian nationals have signed up for support jobs with the Russian Army. The Indian Embassy has regularly taken up this matter with the relevant Russian authorities for their early discharge," said MEA spokesman Randhir Jaiswal.

India has also urged its nationals to exercise caution and stay away from the conflict.

Reportedly, the family members of many of these Indian nationals have said that their loved ones have been duped by foreign recruiters in Russia and that they have been forced to join the Wagner Group (a private militia).

The Wagner Group officially known as PMC Wagner is a Russian state-funded army earlier controlled by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close ally of Russian President Putin. These troops have infrastructure support by the Russian Army and troops are sent to fight in various conflicts like the ongoing one between Russia and Ukraine.

Reports also said that many Indians who had signed up as "security helpers" for the Russian military were compelled to fight alongside Russian troops along the Ukrainian border. Indians have also been stranded at many locations along the Russia-Ukraine border, including Mariupol and Kharkiv.

Ukraine has suffered setbacks on the battlefield, having lost the strategic eastern city of Avdiivka following intense battles this month, and as military aid for Kyiv hangs in the balance in the US Congress.

Meanwhile, Russian shelling and rocket strikes on Sunday continued to pummel Ukraine's south and east.

Compelled to fight

Reports also said that many Indians who had signed up as "security helpers" for the Russian military were compelled to fight alongside Russian troops along the Ukrainian border. Indians have also been stranded at many locations along the Russia-Ukraine border, including Mariupol and Kharkiv.

Most Indians choose over-the-counter immunity boosters over doctors: Study

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

A majority of Indians are hooked to nutraceuticals like vitamins and immunity boosters, believing that they keep them safe from ailments and lifestyle diseases without consulting doctors, a survey said.

The consumers get the nutraceutical products from medical stores, general stores, and e-commerce platforms without any doctor's prescription, said the survey conducted among 47,000 people in 318 districts of the country.

Highlighting that there is an unsupervised growth in demand and consumption of nutraceuticals, probiotics, and health supplements for medical purposes, the survey conducted by LocalCircles, a community social media platform, said 7 in 10 consumers confirmed taking some nutraceuticals.

The survey asked consumers whether they take any vitamin, mineral, fibre, omega, herbs, or other nutraceutical tablets daily. The response was on familiar lines. While 16 per cent said several of them, 30 per cent said "1 or 2", and another 25 per cent said "on and off, and not regularly."

"We found that 71 per cent of consumers are taking nutraceuticals (vitamin, mineral, fiber, omega, herbs & others) regularly," said the survey.

The survey said that 63 per cent of consumers said they get these nutraceuticals — food or elements of food obtained from plant or animal origin with significant medical or health benefits mainly employed to prevent or cure diseases — from medical stores. Some said they get it from local general stores, e-commerce platforms, or ePharmacy platforms.

"On aggregate, 68 per cent of consumers who consume nutraceuticals say they buy them from local medical or general stores," the survey added.

What was worrisome was that 69 per cent of consumers said they were taking some or all the nutraceuticals without a doctor's prescription.

Sachin Taparia, founder of LocalCircles, told this paper that the Foods Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) only looks into the quality of the products and not their usage or marketing.

Quoting this paper's story that the health ministry is proposing to set up a committee headed by the Health Secretary to address overlapping concerns between nutraceuticals and drugs, he said as there is a rising demand for functional foods, which have specific health and medical benefits, the India plant-based nutraceutical market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15 per cent in the forecast period of 2022-2027, according to the expertmarketresearch.com.

WHY WE TAKE NUTRACEUTICALS
Vitamins and immunity boosters are often taken in the belief that they will keep us safe
Consumers get these products from medical stores, general stores and e-commerce platforms without a prescription
Growth in demand and consumption of nutraceuticals, probiotics, and health supplements is currently unsupervised and unregulated
7 in 10 consumers confirmed taking some nutraceuticals
30% of people said they take one or two supplements daily

Indians spend less on food, more on tobacco

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

THE monthly expenditure and consumption patterns of Indian households are changing, shows the latest report of the National Statistical Organisation (NSO). While there is a reduction in expenditure on food items and education, the spending on medical expenses, conveyance, rent and unhealthy items such as pan, tobacco, intoxicants has seen a rise.

The expenditure and consumption patterns of both rural and urban households are almost similar, with one exception. The trend of spending on egg, fish and meat in urban households has fallen compared to rural households, where it has marginally increased.

The government is yet to release the detailed report, Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, which was conducted during August 2022 to July 2023. Such a survey is being released after almost a decade.

It is worth mentioning that the government had earlier junked the 2017-18 report of NSO, citing lack of "data quality", although critics say it was binned due to the "adverse findings". The earlier report had shown that household spending had declined for the first time in the last four decades.

The latest NSO report shows that both rural and urban India has reduced its expenditure on food consumption and increased expenditure on non-food items in the last one decade. In 2011, urban India used to spend 42.6% of its monthly expenditure on food, which reduced to 39%. In rural India, the expenditure on food was reduced from 52.8% to 46.38%.

The consumption of cereals reduced drastically, along with pulses, vegetables, edible oils, salt and sugar. There is a similar decline in expenditure on education, fuels and light, clothing and footwear.

Experts say expenditure on cereals has reduced owing to government welfare schemes.

"The Union government, as well as many state governments, provides free cereals under different schemes such as PMGKY, which prompt consumers to spend less on it," said PC Mohanan, India's former chief statistician. He further said that in urban areas, people started buying food from outside and this could also be a reason for spending less on cereals and pulses.

Inflation has impacted consumption patterns as well. "The high prices of pulses, vegetables and edible oils in the past few years have impacted consumers all across the country," said a senior official at the Department of Consumer Affairs. The government has been taking various measures to control prices in the last few years.

"Spending less on fuel and light is also due to the Ujjwala scheme and solar schemes providing cheap energy sources," said Mohanan.

However, industry experts are clueless about why people have started spending less on non-food items such as education, clothing and footwear.

The report also points to increasing consumption of unhealthy items such as pan, tobacco and other intoxicants. The medical expenses as well as expenditure on rent and conveyance have also increased. Spending on milk and milk-related products have seen a marginal spike.

The report also underlined increasing rural and urban divide in expenditure patterns. Gujarat tops the list among states where rural monthly expenditures are way behind the urban. In Kerala and Punjab, the divide is negligible.

ITEMS ON WHICH HOUSEHOLD SPENDING DIPPED IN 10 YEARS IN RURAL AREAS
Cereals 10.7 6.90
Pulses 2.9 2.01
Sugar & Salt 1.83 0.92
Edible oil 3.7 3.52
Vegetables 6.62 5.26
Education 3.49 3.23
Fuel & Light 7.9 6.6
Clothing 5.99 5.18
Foot wear 1.02 0.85
2011-12 (%)
2022-23 (%)
Experts are clueless why people are spending less on education, clothing & footwear
Where money is going
ITEMS ON WHICH SPENDING WENT UP IN PAST 10 YEARS IN RURAL AREAS
Items | 2011-12 (%) | 2022-23 (%)
Milk & milk products | 8 | 8.14
Egg, fish, meat | 4.79 | 4.8
Medical | 6.6 | 7
Rent | 0.4 | 0.78
Pan, tobacco, intoxicant | 3.2 | 3.7
Conveyance | 4.2 | 7.48
The NSO report also points to increasing consumption of unhealthy items such as pan, tobacco and other intoxicants

FOOD SAFETY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually unveiled a new microbiology laboratory and 17 Food Safety on Wheels (FSW) vehicles in Assam, collectively valued at ₹13.11 crore.

3 HELD FOR VEHICLE THEFTS IN MUMBAI

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	31	21	Mumbai	34	25
Bhopal	27	17	Panaji	33	23
Jaipur	23	17	Patna	27	16
Amritsar	23	13	Lucknow	26	14
Chennai	30	27	Port Blair	29	27
Kolkata	26	19	Imphal	21	11
Srinagar	04	-01	Chandigarh	22	13

Shah draws poll battle lines in MP

Makes light of Rahul's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which will enter the state on March 2

ANURAAG SINGH @ Bhopal

VYING to win all 29 seats of Madhya Pradesh in the coming Lok Sabha polls, union home minister and BJP's prime strategist Amit Shah spent entire Sunday in the central Indian state – addressing Lok Sabha cluster office bearers, booth level workers and enlightened citizens.

Considered the mind behind BJP's resounding 2023 MP assembly polls success, Shah started the Sunday visit with the meeting of Gwalior-Chambal region's Lok Sabha cluster (comprising Morena, Gwalior, Guna and Bhind-SC) office bearers in Gwalior.

He then addressed a gathering of booth level workers of Khajuraho constituency (which has been left by Congress for Samajwadi Party) and ended the day by addressing intellectuals and prominent citizens in capital Bhopal.

Shah drew parallels between Mahabharata (Pandavas Vs Kauravas battle) and the coming LS polls. "The coming elections are a battle between those who live for the country and those who live for their families. Any political party is identified by its programs. What is the Congress's program, it's to carry out Yatra when elections are there and set a new member of its family. BJP on the other hand, right since the Bharatiya Jana Sangh days, has been working for strengthening the nation, spanning from movement for abrogation of Indian Constitution's Article 370 to the Ram Temple Movement and LK Advani's Yatra against corruption."

"Our party, since its inception, has been working for strengthening the nation and not for launching any Rajkumar (prince). Only one man, Rahul Gandhi, has been launched by the Congress every time in a new look since the last 20 years. But he is that rocket that doesn't get launched, as it reverses just after every launch. They (Congress) are again out in the elections with the same rocket," Shah said, making light of ex-AICC president Rahul Gandhi and his ongoing Manipur-Mumbai Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which is slated to enter in MP on March 2.

Seeking a third decisive term with 400-plus seats for the NDA government led PM Modi, Shah said "As you all shape the public opinion, let me assure you that the PM has set many targets for the future, including making India a 5 trillion dollar economy by 2027 and third largest economy in next five years, taking exports to two trillion dollar by 2030, hosting Summer Olympics in India in 2036, sending humans to the moon by 2040 and making India completely developed and global superpower in 2047. For these targets to be achieved, a third decisive term for the present central government is necessary."

Earlier addressing the booth level workers gathering in Khajuraho Lok Sabha constituency, Shah urged every booth level worker to turn into Narendra Modi and add 370 additional votes on each booth to attain the target of winning all 29 seats in MP and 370-plus seats for the BJP nationally.

Amit Shah attends meeting in Gwalior-Chambal region | PTI

Electoral significance

- Shah started from Gwalior-Chambal as Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will enter the state from that region only on March 2.
- BJP won lowest 18 seats in Gwalior-Chambal against Congress's 16 seats in recent assembly polls
- Shah's second stop was Khajuraho, which has been left by Congress for SP
- Last was Bhopal, where party has won since 1989

Judiciary protecting Shahjahan, not our party, says Abhishek

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

TMC's second-in-command Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday held the judiciary responsible for action not being taken against Sandeshkhali's strongman Shahjahan Sheikh, not the ruling TMC. He also gave a clear hint that the party would not stand by Shahjahan, who is presently in the epicentre of the state politics which has become a national outcry.

"The Calcutta High Court tied up the hands of the police by issuing a stay order on the probe against Shahjahan on the basis of ED's petition. Had it not been there and had the court given the police a stipulate time, the state's law enforcers could have been shown what they can do," said Abhishek, who is also the nephew of CM Mamata Banerjee.

Referring to the allegations laid down by the BJP and other opposition parties accusing the ruling TMC of giving Shahjahan protection, Abhishek said, "I would like to ask them to go to the high court and place their demand of Shahjahan's arrest. We did not petition seeking the stay order on the probe. It was the Central government's agency that sought the stay order. the Judiciary is protecting Shahjahan, not our party."

Making it clear that the party would not stand by Shahjahan, the TMC MP from Diamond Harbour said, "The state took action against former ministers Partha Chatterjee and Jyotipriya Mullick by removing them from the cabinet after they were arrested by central agencies on corruption charges, then who is Shahjahan? Many leaders sitting in Delhi and this state are instigating people of Sandeshkhali and playing divisive politics."

Probe team not let in

Six members of an independent fact-finding team led by former Chief Justice of Patna HC L Narasimha Reddy were stopped by police as they were proceeding to Sandeshkhali to probe alleged incidents of atrocities on women. Citing Section 144 CrPC was in force in parts of Sandeshkhali, senior cops stopped their convoy.

JAIPUR DIARY

RAJESH ASNANI

Our correspondent in Jaipur

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CM to travel like ordinary citizens

Under Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma's new directive, his convoy will halt at red signals, aligning with the general public's adherence to traffic rules. With the CM adhering to this decision by halting his convoy at red signals in Jaipur, onlookers are greatly surprised, with some seizing the moment to capture photographs of the VIP in their midst. DGP UR Sahu disclosed that the CM highlighted the prevalent traffic woes faced by the public, advocating for a solution to alleviate their daily commuting challenges. The move is reminiscent of the tenure of former BJP Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje.

Ministers scolded by Shah in poll prep meet

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's tough attitude towards state ministers during his recent visit to Rajasthan is creating a big buzz. When Shah wanted some information on assembly constituencies for the Lok Sabha seats in a meeting, three ministers - Gajendra Singh Khinvsar, Sumit Godara and Avinash Gehlot - remained mum. Shah pulled them up and said they can't be spared just because they're ministers. Later, they were made to stand before Shah for 40 minutes after which he asked them to submit their poll preparation reports at the earliest.

Gold mine to be auctioned soon

For the first time, a gold mine is going to be auctioned in Rajasthan. The Mining Department has prepared a proposal for auction of two mines in Bhukia-Jagpura of Banswara district. This special tender will also be issued through the Centre's e-portal within a month. The Mining Department claims there are gold reserves in 14 square kilometer area of Bhukia-Jagpura region. It is estimated that 11.352 tonnes of gold ore will be produced from both the mines of which 222.39 tonnes of pure gold will be available. Rajasthan is the second state where gold will be produced. Once operational, the state's share in gold mining will increase to 25%.

Akhilesh finally joins Rahul's yatra

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

IN a boost to the Opposition INDIA bloc, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday joined Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Agra. The SP chief's action comes four days after sealing the seat-sharing pact with the Congress in Uttar Pradesh for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Akhilesh joined the Yatra in its last leg in Uttar Pradesh.

The move is significant as the SP chief had refused to join the Yatra saying the seat-sharing deal should be finalised first.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi welcomed Akhilesh saying: "Today is a very happy day".

At the yatra, the SP leader raised the slogan 'BJP haatao, desh bachao', adding that the biggest challenge would be to save the democracy and the Constitution in the Lok Sabha polls. He said that the main task of INDIA would be to fulfil the dreams of Dr BR Ambedkar, which he alleged the BJP had shattered.

As per the seat sharing deal between the Congress and SP, the Congress will contest on 63 seats in the state. The remaining 63 seats will be contested by the SP and other parties willing to be part of INDIA alliance.

Sukhu says will pay ₹1,500 a month to women, claims election promise fulfilled

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

THE Congress-led Himachal Pradesh government today launched the Indira Gandhi Pyaari Behna Samman Nidhi Yojana that entails Rs 1,500 per month to all women in Lahaul and Spit, fulfilling one of its election guarantees.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched the initial phase of the scheme meant for all women of Lahaul and Spit aged 18 or above. "The state government was fulfilling all its guarantees in a phased manner," said Sukhu.

Beginning his speech before the local people by greeting them 'jule,' the CM thanked them for their enthusiasm in the chilling -9 degree temperature. Sukhu also announced Rs 1,500 from February 1, to 2.37 lakh women who were receiving a pension of Rs 1,100 in the state. In this way, 2.42 lakh women of the state will receive a pension of Rs 1,500 per month.

"We do what we say. We have come to extend the benefits of the schemes to the last person standing in the queue and lay the foundation for a self-reliant Himachal," he said.

He announced that the schools will remain closed in Lahaul Spiti in winters and the session would be held in summers. He also announced opening of block development office in Udaipur, Rajiv Gandhi Day Boarding School in Darcha, and the commencement of a sewerage and water drainage scheme for Keylong.

> **The state was fulfilling all its guarantees in a phased manner. We have come to extend the benefits of the schemes to the last person standing in the queue**
>
> Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, CM

Sukhu further stated that the government was committed to fulfill all of its guarantees in a phased manner. "The state government has restored the OPS despite many restrictions imposed by the Central government, so that government employees live with dignity after retirement. "As soon as the BJP government was formed in Rajasthan, the OPS scheme was withdrawn," he said.

He said that Himachal Pradesh would become the first state in the country to increase the age of marriage for girls from 18 years to 21 years.

Congress a sinking ship, uses tribals as vote bank, says C'garh CM in T'gana

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

CHHATTISGARH chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Sunday cited Congress as the "sinking ship" where many leaders are leaving to join the other parties.

Addressing the inaugural public meeting of BJP's Vijay Sankalp Yatra at Bhadrachalam on Sunday in adjoining Telangana state, Sai urged the people to be a source of strength for the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and turn India a third economic power globally by 2045 (he referred Sone Ki Chidiya) by voting for the BJP.

"Congress is a mother of corruption and uses tribals merely as its vote bank. But the BJP has always given the tribal community their due share. It's possible only in the BJP that an ordinary party worker and a tribal like me can become the chief minister.

Under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, a separate ministry of tribal welfare was created, earmarked funds for holistic development of adivasi samaj", he said aiming to win the tribals' support and further added that the BJP remains as the biggest political party where the democracy works and its workers remain the real strength.

The Chhattisgarh CM said that owing to rampant corruption during the Manmohan Singh government at the Centre, the Congress leaders and ministers had to go to jail.

"Consequently the people had resolutely rejected the Congress that now remains confined to a limited area. We need to defeat Congress from this region too", he averred.

The Vijay Sankalp Yatra was launched from the party's cluster that covers three Lok Sabha constituencies—Warrangal, Mahabubad and Khammam.

The tribal CM was speaking in the Mahabubad constituency, which happens to be the reserved Scheduled Tribe seat.

"There remains similarities between Telangana and Chhattisgarh and both the states are newly created, though our state came into existence earlier. Here a very old temple of Lord Ram exists and in Chhattisgarh we have the temple of Mata Kaushalya (mother of Ram). Chhattisgarh state is a maternal home (nanihaal) of Ram", Sai said at Bhadrachalam.

He eulogised PM Modi as a charismatic leader who has emerged very popular worldwide and said, "The PM works taking everyone along with a vision—sabka saath sabka vikas, sabka vishwas, sabka prayas. We need to support the BJP as it is the party that works for village (rural), poor, farmers, labourers. Several welfare schemes for them were accomplished from 2014-19 in the Centre led by PM Modi", the CM said.

CM Vishnu Deo Sai at Shri Sitaramchandra Swami Temple in Telangana | EXPRESS

7 dead, many injured as fire engulfs cracker unit in UP's Kaushambi

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

AT least seven persons were killed and half a dozen injured in a fire that broke out at a firecracker factory in Bharwari village of Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi district, adjacent to Prayagraj, on Sunday, officials said. The incident happened around 11.30 am under the Kokhraj police station limit.

Several fire brigade teams and ambulances rushed to the spot soon after and started relief and rescue work. Additional Director General of Police (Prayagraj) Bhanu Bhaskar, who rushed to the site of incident, confirmed casualties.

As per the police sources, one of the deceased was identified as Shiv Narayan, 30, who worked at the factory. "We are in the process of identifying the others," the officer added. Among the injured, those identified include Bablu Patel, Deena Patel, Ashok Patel and Kaushal Ali.

"Some of the injured have been sent to hospitals in critical condition. The factory is quite far from residential areas. The victims are those who worked at the factory. The owner had a licence to run the factory," said Kaushambi Superintendent of Police Brijesh Srivastava. Moreover, the owner of the firecracker factory Shahid Ali was among those who lost their lives in the inferno.

As per the sources, over two dozen persons were working inside the factory at the time of incident. The intensity of the blaze leading to blasts could be gauged from the fact that the police officials found human remains at a distance of 500 metres from the factory.

Police authorities and fire brigade were pressed into service for rescue work as 13 persons were feared trapped inside.

Setback to Mayawati as BSP MP quits party and joins BJP ahead of LS polls

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

BSP Lok Sabha MP Ritesh Pandey on Sunday resigned from the party's primary membership and joined the BJP, another switchover ahead of the general elections.

BSP MP from Ghazipur Afzal Ansari defected to the SP last month. Pandey, who had won the Ambedkar Nagar Lok Sabha seat by defeating BJP's Mukut Bihari by nearly a lakh votes in the 2019 elections, joined the BJP in New Delhi in the presence of UP deputy CM Brajesh Pathak, BJP UP chief Bhupendra Chaudhury and party's incharge Baijayant Panda.

Reacting to the development, BSP chief Mayawati said all her party MPs must introspect if they looked after the people in their constituencies and gave them time. "They must also introspect if they followed the party's directions," she said. In his resignation letter to Mayawati, Pandey said he has come to the conclusion that the party does not need his service as neither has he been called

for meetings for a long time nor has the party leadership spoken to him.

"I made numerous efforts to get in touch with and meet you (Mayawati) and the top leadership of the party but it did not yield any result," Pandey said in the letter. Hours later, he joined the BJP.

The buzz around Pandey's decision to switch over to the BJP is that he would be given ticket from his Ambedkar Nagar seat by the BJP to take on SP candidate and sitting MLA Lalji Verma. Ritesh Pandey's father Rakesh Pandey is a sitting SP MLA from Jalalpur assembly segment. Rakesh had represented Ambedkar Nagar as the BSP MP from 2007-14.

Two Cong MLAs join saffron camp in Arunachal

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

TWO MLAs each from the Congress and the National People's Party (NPP) on Sunday joined the ruling BJP in Arunachal Pradesh. MLAs Ninong Ering and Wanglin Lowangdong (Congress) and Mutchu Mithi and Gokar Basar (NPP) joined the BJP in the presence of Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Assam minister Ashok Singhal in Itanagar.

Welcoming the four legislators, Khandu said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's transformative leadership, centered around the motto of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas', has brought about positive change across the country. Their joining the party will fortify our base in their respective constituencies and Arunachal."

I gave five lakh jobs in 17 months, my guarantee worked, says Tejashwi

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

AHEAD of Lok Sabha election, RJD leader and Bihar's former deputy chief minister Tejashwi Prasad Yadav is attempting to win people's support by highlighting how he and his party put maximum efforts for providing jobs and creating employment opportunities.

Besides targeting Bihar chief minister and JD (U) president Nitish Kumar through his diatribes, Tejashwi also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the employment front at his public meetings organised during his ongoing 'Jan Vishwas Yatra' in Gaya.

He launched his 'Jan Vishwas Yatra' to reach out maximum number of people of the state on February 20.

While addressing the rally, participated by a large number of youths, Tejashwi said, "PM Narendra Modi's guarantee for two crier jobs failed but my guarantee worked. In the 2020 state assembly election, I had promised to give 10 lakh government jobs."

"When I got the chance (as deputy chief minister), I gave five lakh jobs in 17 months. My elderly 'chacha' (Nitish) took U-turn in between and had he continued with us for some more time, I would have fulfilled the promise," he added.

RJD leader appealed to people to come to Patna on March 3 to participate in 'Jan Vishwas Maharally' in Gandhi Maidan, which will be attended by top leaders of Opposition 'INDIA' bloc, including former Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

9
supporters of South Africa's ruling ANC were killed in a bus crash as they were travelling home after attending a key electoral rally on Sunday

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	5	-4	SNY	Los Angeles	18	13	LR
Colombo	33	24	SNY	Melbourne	22	9	LR
Dhaka	29	17	SNY	Moscow	0	-5	LC
Dubai	24	14	SNY	New York	13	3	SNY
Houston	28	19	SNY	Singapore	34	25	SNY
Istanbul	16	8	SNY	Toronto	6	2	SNY
London	9	1	WI	Washington	18	8	SNY

TRUMP SOLIDIFIES POSITION WITH BIG WIN IN S CAROLINA PRIMARY

Former prez builds on his primary wins in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada & US Virgin Islands

> We're going to be up here on November 5, and we're going to look at Joe Biden, and we're gonna look him right in the eye. He's destroying our country and we're gonna say 'Get out, Joe. You're fired'
>
> Donald Trump

CHARLESTON

DONALD Trump secured a resounding win over his Indian-American rival Nikki Haley in her backyard in South Carolina in the Republican primary, enabling the former US president to move closer to clinching a third straight presidential nomination from his party in 2024.

Refusing to give up, Haley, 52, a two-time former governor of South Carolina on Saturday vowed to take the fight to the Super Tuesday states on March 5 when Republican primaries are scheduled to be held in 21 US states.

Trump, 77, has now won every contest that counted for Republican delegates, adding to his previous wins in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and the US Virgin Islands.

The South Carolina primary race was called mere minutes after polls closed. After results were counted, US media outlets said Haley received 39.5 per cent of the vote in the Palmetto State while Trump got 59.8 per cent.

A candidate needs 1,215 delegates to bag the party's nomination in the November 5, 2024 presidential election. So far, Trump has won 102 delegates while Haley, the only major contender to the Republican frontrunner, has just 17 delegates.

"There's never been a spirit like this, and I just want to say that. I have never seen the Republican Party so unified," he told his cheering supporters. Notably, he did not mention Haley in his speech nor did he ask her to drop from the race.

Haley in her speech in Charleston congratulated Trump on his South Carolina victory.

Trump, who by now has won all four Republican primaries in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, exuded confidence that he would defeat incumbent President Biden in November.

"We're going to be up here on November 5, and we're going to look at Joe Biden, and we're gonna look him right in the eye. He's destroying our country and we're gonna say 'Get out, Joe. You're fired," Trump said amidst loud applause from his audience. *PTI*

Haley vows to continue her bid for White House

CHARLESTON

SATURDAY'S result now places the onus on Indian-American Nikki Haley, who continued in her concession speech to insist she has no plans to drop out of the race, a move that she said would leave the Republican voters in the upcoming primary states with 'a Soviet-style election with only one candidate.'

Haley told supporters in Charleston, "I said earlier this week that no matter what happens in South Carolina, I would continue to run for president. I'm a woman of my word. I'm not giving up this fight when a majority of Americans disapprove of both Donald Trump and Joe Biden."

> I will keep fighting – for them and for you and for all of America! I'm running for president to save America... We can't afford four more years of Biden's failures or Trump's lack of focus
>
> Nikki Haley

"What I saw today was South Carolina's frustration with our country's direction. I've seen that same frustration nationwide. I share it. I feel it to my core. I couldn't be more worried for America. It seems like our country is coming apart. But here's the thing. America will come apart if we make the wrong choices. We need to beat Joe Biden in November," she said amidst cheers from her supporters.

"I don't believe Donald Trump can beat Joe Biden. Nearly every day, Trump drives people away, including with his comments just yesterday.," Haley said.

Meanwhile, Haley criticised both Biden and Trump in her speech. "Does anyone seriously think Joe Biden or Donald Trump will unite our country to solve our problems? One of them calls his fellow Americans fascists. The other calls his fellow Americans vermin. They aren't fighting for our country's future. They're demanding we fight each other. You deserve better!" she said.

"So I will keep fighting – for them and for you and for all of America! I'm running for president to save America... We can't afford four more years of Biden's failures or Trump's lack of focus," she said. *PTI*

Israeli media reports progress on temporary truce with Gaza

TEL AVIV

AN Israeli military offensive in the southernmost city of Rafah could be 'delayed somewhat' if a deal for a weeks-long ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is reached, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday, but claimed that total victory in Gaza is 'weeks away' once the offensive begins.

Netanyahu confirmed that a deal is in the works, with no details. Israeli media reported that mediators were making progress on an agreement for a cease-fire and release of dozens of hostages held in Gaza as well as Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Several Israeli media outlets, citing unnamed officials, said the War Cabinet tacitly approved it.

Hamas says it has not yet been involved in the latest proposal developed by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, but the reported outline largely matches its earlier demands for the first phase of a truce.

Israel is meanwhile developing plans for expanding its offensive to the southernmost city of Rafah, on the Gaza-Egypt border, where over half the territory's population of 2.3 million have sought refuge in squalid tent camps, packed apartments and overflowing shelters. Aid groups warned of a catastrophe and the US and other allies of Israel have said it must avoid harming civilians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he'll convene the Cabinet this week to 'approve the operational plans for action in Rafah', including the evacuation of civilians.

A senior official from Egypt, which along with Qatar is a mediator between Israel and the Hamas militant group, said Saturday that the draft cease-fire deal includes the release of up to 40 women and older hostages in return for up to 300 Palestinian prisoners, mostly women, minors and older people.

The official said the proposed six-week pause in fighting would include allowing hundreds of trucks to bring desperately needed aid into Gaza every day, including the northern half of the besieged territory. He said that both sides agreed to continue negotiations during the pause for further releases and a permanent cease-fire. *AP*

WAR WATCH
ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 140

GAZA TOLL SO FAR
29,692

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said on Sunday that at least 86people have been killed in the past 24 hours, while 69,879 people have been injured since October 7

Newborns dying in Rafah

The war has devastated Gaza's health sector. Less than half of hospitals even partially function. At the Emirates Hospital in Rafah, three to four newborns are placed in each of its 20 incubators, which are designed for just one. Dr Amal Ismail said two to three newborns die in a single shift, in part because many families live in tents in rainy, cold weather. Before the war, one or two newborns in incubators there died per month. 'No matter how much we work with them, it is all wasted,' she said. AP

Hunger grips war-torn Gaza

GAZA STRIP

DIRE food shortages sent hundreds of Palestinians fleeing northern Gaza on Sunday as Israel's war against Hamas raged on despite stuttering efforts towards a ceasefire and hostage release deal. Desperate families in the north of the besieged war zone have been forced to scavenge for food as fighting and looting have stopped humanitarian aid trucks from reaching the devastated area.

Hundreds fled northern Gaza Sunday and headed south whichever way the could, walking down garbage-strewn roads between the blackened shells of bombed-out buildings, said an AFP correspondent.

"I came on foot from north Gaza," said one of them, Samir Abd Rabbo, 27, who arrived with his one-year-old daughter at the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip.

"I can't describe the kind of starvation spreading there."

Without milk, he said, he had tried to feed his baby girl bread made from animal feed, which she was unable to digest. "Our only hope is God, there is nobody else to help." *AFP*

A child carries a jerrican of water as he walks in front of the Al-Faruq mosque, levelled by Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip | AFP

EXPRESS READ

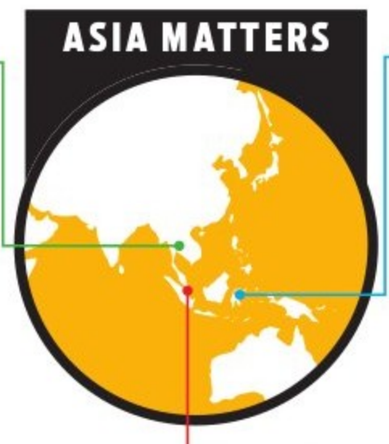
Sri Lanka to end visa extensions to Russian, Ukrainian tourists

Colombo: Thousands of Russians and Ukrainians staying in Sri Lanka on extended visas due to the war have been asked to leave the island nation within two weeks, officials said. However, President Ranil Wickremesinghe has ordered an investigation as to how the decision was made without a cabinet decision. PTI

IS landmine kills 13 truffle hunters in Syria

Beirut: A blast from a landmine left by the Islamic State group killed at least 13 civilians foraging for truffles in the Syrian desert, a war monitor said. "Thirteen civilians, including women... were killed when a landmine left by the IS group exploded while they were searching for truffles" in the desert in Raqa province, said the Syria Observatory for Human Rights. AFP

ASIA MATTERS



THAILAND

MOBILE GAME TO FEATURE THAI TOURISTS SPOTS

Tourism and Sports Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol said that Gravity's hit mobile game Ragnarok Origin will feature popular tourist destinations in secondary provinces of the country. "One of the places would be Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya as it has beautiful places including World Heritage sites and a strong cultural identity. Ragnarok Origin (ROO) is a mobile game and a sequel to the iconic multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) Ragnarok Online (RO) created by Korean developer Gravity. RO attracted more than 50 million players worldwide during its peak. Agencies

SINGAPORE

SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS TO KEEP TAPS FLOWING

Seeking solutions for water scarcity, Singapore's has come up with a cutting-edge water management system that combines technology, diplomacy and community involvement to help secure its water future. Storm water is collected in reservoirs and purified for use by the country's six million residents. AP

INDONESIA

5.6 MAGNITUDE QUAKE SHAKES JAKARTA

A moderately strong earthquake on late Sunday shook parts of Indonesia's main island of Java and the country's capital Jakarta. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. The US Geological Survey said that the shallow quake had a preliminary magnitude of 5.6 and that it occurred 37.2km below the surface. The epicentre was 80 km west-southwest of Pelabuhanratu, a coastal town in West Java province. The quake was strongly felt in several cities and villages. High-rises in Jakarta, the capital, swayed for several seconds, even two-storey homes shook strongly in West Java provincial capital Bandung. AP

US-British strikes on Yemen 'escalate tensions'

TEHRAN

IRAN condemned on Sunday the latest strikes by the United States and Britain on Yemen, saying they were seeking to "escalate tensions and crises" in the region.

On Saturday, American and British forces carried out fresh strikes against 18 Houthi targets in Yemen, in response to a wave of attacks by the Iran-backed group on Red Sea shipping.

"With such attacks, America and Britain seek to escalate tensions and crises in the region, and expand the scope of war and instability," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said in a statement.

"Certainly, this kind of arbitrary and aggressive military operation, aside from aggravating insecurity and instability in the region, will not achieve anything for these aggressor countries," Kanani added.

The Houthis say their attacks on shipping around the Red Sea are in support of Palestinians in war-ravaged Gaza.

Iran backs Hamas but has denied any involvement in the October 7 attack. *AFP*

Punjab CM election today, Maryam Nawaz files nomination

LAHORE

SENIOR PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, on Sunday filed her nomination papers for the post of chief minister of Pakistan's politically crucial Punjab province.

"The nomination papers of Maryam Nawaz Sharif for the Chief Minister of Punjab have been submitted,' the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) said in a post on X.

Maryam, the 50-year-old senior vice president of the PML-N, is set to become the first woman chief minister of Punjab province, a province of over 120 million people, as she enjoys the support of the majority in the house.

She has already been given security usually provided to the chief minister and she is holding meetings with the top bureaucracy of the province.

She is considered to be the political heir of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, who surprisingly nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif as his party's prime ministerial candidate.

"The election of Chief Minister Punjab will take place on Monday. The candidates of CM can submit nomination papers on Sunday (today)," Punjab Assembly Secretary Amer Habib said in a statement on Sunday.

Maryam Nawaz

PTI changes Punjab CM candidate

Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf leader and former federal minister Hammad Azhar posted on X, "As the Punjab police are present at the Punjab Assembly to arrest our CM candidate, Aslam Iqbal, the party leadership has decided to nominate Rana Aftab Ahmad Khan for the CM slot. Rana Aftab is the senior member of the PA who in the past got elected PA member five times."

Meanwhile, the PML-N clinched both speaker and deputy speaker offices in the Punjab Assembly.

In a marathon session of the Punjab Assembly on Saturday, the lawmakers elected PML-N leader Malik Ahmad Khan as the custodian of the house and Zaheer Iqbal Channar as his deputy.

The election for the Chief Minister office will be held between Maryam and Rana Aftab Ahmad of Imran Khan's PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) nominee.

The PML-N won 137 seats while independents backed by former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won 113 in the Punjab Assembly. Separately, 20-odd independents, not PTI-backed, have already joined the PML-N.

The PTI-backed independent candidates have joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) to get reserved seats for women and minorities besides saving their elected members from being forced to change their loyalty by the military establishment.

However, the SIC may not get reserved seats for women and minorities, leaving the PML-N with a simple majority in Punjab. *PTI*

PPP's Owais Shah elected as Sindh assembly speaker

KARACHI

SENIOR leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party Syed Owais Shah was on Sunday elected as the Speaker of the Sindh province Assembly while the party's Christian face Anthony Naveed was elected as his deputy, becoming the first non-Muslim deputy speaker in the country's history.

Outgoing speaker Agha Siraj Durrani said a total of 147 votes were cast for the post of speaker, of which Shah received 111. His opponent and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Pakistan) leader Sofia Shah got 36 votes, Dawn newspaper reported.

Nine independent members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and one member of the Jamaat-e-Islami did not participate in the voting and boycotted the election.

PPP leader and prominent Christian rights activist Anthony Naveed was elected as the deputy speaker of the provincial assembly, becoming the first non-Muslim deputy speaker in the history of Pakistan. Naveed secured 111 votes while MQM-P's Rashid Khan got 36 votes. Following the win, Naveed took his oath in Urdu and then went up to the speaker's dais to embrace Speaker Shah.

On Sunday, nine PTI-backed independent members of the Sindh Assembly also took the oath, resulting in a total of 157 members taking the oath. Jamaat-e-Islami's member Muhammad Farooq also took the oath, while 3 members of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) were absent. With 114 members, the PPP is the largest party in the Sindh Assembly, and MQM-P is the second-largest party with 36 seats. The GDA has 3 members, Jamaat-e-Islami has 1, and there are 9 independent members.

On Saturday, several new and young faces, who had won the recent general election in Sindh, were sworn in as lawmakers of the Sindh Assembly. *PTI*

UKRAINE'S DEFENCE MIN SAYS DELAYS IN PROMISED MILITARY AID COSTING LIVES

KYIV: HALF of promised Western military support to Ukraine fails to arrive on time, complicating the task of military planners and ultimately costing the lives of soldiers, the country's defense minister said on Sunday. Speaking at the 'Ukraine. Year 2024' forum in Kyiv, Rustan Umerov said that each delayed aid shipment meant Ukrainian troop losses, and underscored Russia's superior military might. Commemorations to mark the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Saturday brought expressions of continued support, new bilateral security agreements and fresh aid commitments from Ukraine's Western allies. *AP*

FORM NO. URC-2

Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Act [Pursuant to Section 374(b) of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the Companies(Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that in pursuance of Sub-Section (2) of Section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application is proposed to be made after fifteen days hereof but before the expiry of thirty days hereinafter to the Registrar at Bangalore that **ISHANA VENTURES (Trade Name Café Amudham)**a Partnership Firm may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a Company limited by shares.
2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:
1. To engage in the business of operating hotels, restaurants, food joints, fast-food outlets, cafeterias, food courts and cafes and to manufacture food and beverages for catering services and other related services both within and outside of India.
2. To engage in the business of manufacturing food items like processed foods, healthy foods, dairy products, frozen foods, confectionery items, beverages and more and to operate both within and outside of India.
3. To engage in the business of owning, operating and managing hotels, resorts, lounges, wayside amenities and caravan parks of own brand or as a franchisee of other brands.
4. To engage in the business of owning brands and offer franchisee rights to others to engage in activities and services specified in 1, 2 and 3 above.
3. A copy of the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the proposed Company may be inspected at the office at No. 192, T Mariyappa Road, LalbhaghSiddapura, Jahangir 1st Block, Bangalore – 560 011, Karnataka, India.
4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre (CRC), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6,7,8, Sector 5, IMTManesar, District Gurgaon (Haryana), Pin Code – 122 050, within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the Company at its registered office.

Dated this Monday, February 26, 2024
Name(s) of Applicant (Partners of ISHANA VENTURES)
1. Mr. Raghunand M. S.
2. Ms. Sruti Rudrappa
3. Ms. Priyanka Rudrappa

₹18,500 CR have been infused by Foreign Portfolio Investors in the debt markets so far this month.

PSU stocks: Do not chase them purely on recent bull-run

Research reports suggest that the PSU pack looks better now and the consensus looks too bullish, however, actual earnings have been flattish for a while

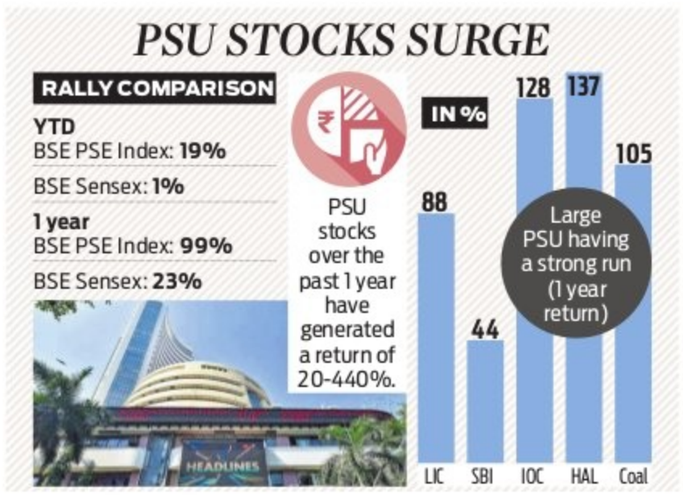
ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

PUBLIC sector undertaking (PSU) stocks are on a roll. Consider this, LIC shares, which were one of the biggest wealth guzzlers for more than a year after launching the country's biggest IPO in May 2022, have gained about 75% in the last 3 months, helping the insurer to become one of the most valuable listed companies on the exchanges. Likewise, shares of the country's largest public sector lender- SBI- have gained 44% in one year time while shares of the largest private lender - HDFC Bank - have given a negative return of 11%.

Stupendous Rally

According to a brokerage firm, PSU stocks over the past 12 months have generated a return of 20-440%. Capital goods, electric utilities, financials and oil, gas & consumable fuels have led the rally in the PSU pack. "There is a positive sentiment for PSU stocks now. Some PSU segments are doing very well like PSU banks where the turnaround is sharp. PSU banks which reported losses of ₹87000 crore in FY 2018 will be making estimated profits of around ₹1.3 lakh crore in FY24. Even after the run-up in prices, PSU banks are fairly valued," said V K, Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, at Geojit Financial Services. He added that many defence-related PSU stocks like shipbuilders have run up too much too fast on order bookings and the Make In India theme.

This stupendous rally, mostly backed by domestic retail investors, however, has started facing resistance over high valuation and associated risk concerns. Add to it, the overall high valuations of the market have started to creep in. Analysts at Bernstein in a recent note said that the PSU index is expensive, trading at 11.2x fwd PE (price-to-earnings) and 1.8x PB (price-to-book) which is +1SD (standard deviation) to the historical average. However, relative to the broader market (BSE 500), the PSU portfolio is still trading below the historical mean on 12m fwd PE and just slightly above the mean on PB. Industrial PSU stocks are the most stretched, trading at +2.5SD to their 10-year PE average. Typically, PSUs trade at a discount to the market, however, now Industrials PSUs are trading at 35% premium to the broader market. Utilities is the second most stretched PSU sector, trading at 1.5SD levels.



Valuation conundrum

The foreign brokerage said while fundamentally the PSU pack looks better now versus history, the consensus looks too bullish. "There has been a reasonable improvement in return on equity (ROEs) (13.5% vs. 11% average) and margins (7.5% vs. 6% average) for the PSU Index. While many PSU names would stack- up well on dividends vs. non-PSUs, the overall index dividend yield has been declining and now sits at 2.8%. Earnings have been a big driver for PSU names so far. However, analysts have never been so bullish on earnings outlook even though actual earnings have been flattish for a while. This could be a key risk, added Bernstein. According to data compiled by Bloomberg, earnings of BSE PSU Index firms beat analysts' expectations by only 1% in the December quarter, the slowest pace in six quarters. For example, shares of Power utility firm SJVN Ltd, which rallied 65% in the month leading to its results announcement earlier this month, reported a 53% drop in third-quarter net income.

Optimistic view

Domestic brokerage firm Kotak Securities finds it hard to accept the market's new narrative of PSUs that may have contributed to the sharp rally in state-run companies in recent months. "In our view, the market is overly focused on near-term ordering and profitability, while ignoring the large downside risks to medium-term profitability, business model challenges and disruption risks. We find certain assumptions, surrounding the medium-to-long-term growth and profitability of these sectors, to be highly optimistic. We doubt much has changed in most sectors," said the brokerage. Analysts at Kotak believe that the market is underestimating the downside risks in assuming large order inflows for an extended period of time, especially in sectors such as thermal electricity generation. Bernstein said Foreign Institutional Investors have always preferred private companies (20.5% now vs. 10 yr avg of 21.5%) over PSUs (9.3% now vs. 10 yr avg of 9.8%) and there hasn't been any shift in this preference in the current cycle. It added that while domestic institutional investors tend to own more PSUs compared to FIIs, however, they have been reducing their ownership in PSU names (13.7% now vs. 10 yr avg of 14.6%) and increasing in non-PSU (15.7% now vs. 10 yr avg of 12.8%) over the last year.

MONEY MATTERS

WHAT WARREN BUFFETT'S LETTER SAID THIS YEAR

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

THE annual letter to shareholders by Warren Buffett, the legendary American investor, is a noteworthy document. It is perhaps the only letter to shareholders that has a following like popular literature. The press around the world covers it extensively. For the 2023 annual report, Warren Buffett starts with a tribute to his long-time business partner, Charlie Munger. He passed away in November 2023. Buffett credits him as an architect of Berkshire Hathaway, the firm the two ran for decades. If you search the internet, you will find lots of literature on the topic.

You may find Warren Buffett's ideas worth noting and implementing.

● Pundits should always be ignored

After paying a rich tribute to his business partner, Charlie Munger, Buffett introduces us to his sister, Bertie. She is a long-time shareholder of Berkshire. He describes her as someone who understands accounting terms but cannot appear for exams. She reads four business papers but does not call herself an expert. She is sensible in ignoring pundits making recommendations about tomorrow's winners. If you could do that, why would you recommend and increase competitive buying of those shares? You could quietly make your investment. He says it is as silly as finding gold and sharing the location with your neighbour. You may agree or disagree with this philosophy. However, you would want to keep that in mind while considering any expert recommendation. There are a lot of reasons why anyone makes any recommendation. These could include generating a fee-based income or brokerage-based income. Buffett has always recommended reading up on yourself to invest.

● Net profit growth trend is not enough

Warren Buffett's letter dwells upon continuous disclosure standards. Companies announce quarterly financial data where they release sales and profit numbers. Such numbers are compared to previous quarters. Buffett describes the 'net income' figure as 'worse-than-useless'. He argues that merely stating the change in the net income is a good starting point but not enough. Berkshire Hathaway emphasizes the operating income or the operating profit, that gives a clear idea of the operational health of the business. Operating profit is the profit before interest and taxation. It is usually used to analyze manufacturing and services companies. Investors use different yardsticks to measure performance. In banking and financial services, the operating profit is less relevant than the net interest margins. Those in financial services have to be efficient borrowers and lenders of money.

● Own fundamentally strong businesses

Berkshire adopts a strategy of owning a part or 100% of businesses that are 'fundamental and enduring'. Buffett is reiterating the Berkshire way of investing based on company fundamentals. There are multiple ways to invest directly in equities. You can own stocks for trading within a settlement cycle. You can also sell or book profits based on technical analysis and not just fundamental analysis. Buffett argues that at Berkshire, they prefer owning businesses that are generally better managers of money. His company favours the rare enterprises that can deploy additional capital at high returns in the future. "Owning only one of these companies – and simply sitting tight – can deliver wealth almost beyond measure," he said in his letter. Such a strategy of 'buying and holding' quality companies allows investors to stay wealthy for generations.

● Importance of solid income and cash flows

The success story of Berkshire Hathaway lies in the company's ability to fortify from catastrophes. Not just fortify but benefit from it. Buffett outlines the 'not-so-secret' weapon the company uses to tackle volatile financial markets. The company's diverse pool of free cash flows is compared to Niagara Falls, the giant freshwater body in North America. When everyone else went through a crisis in 2008, the company had such low expenses that it could depend on the earnings from operations and not on any bank credit. The company holds limited cash in the bank and parks a lot of surplus cash in government bonds. They do not pay dividends, and all share buybacks are at the board's discretion. That allows the company to save adequate money to capitalize on the distress of others in the market when a crisis happens.

MONEY-WISE

FIRST STEP TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM IS GOAL SETTING!

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

THE ONLY person who can motivate you to do certain things is YOU. However, if you are to achieve some of the objectives enumerated here, you have to take action to achieve them. Whether it is setting yourself financial goals, making a budget (and adhering to it!), tracking your financial progress, you need to be motivated enough to do it yourself.

Success happens, when you do. Not when you dream. Great people have achieved success by making it a habit to do things daily, not yearly. So do it. Now. No education, at least in India, prepares you for the most important task of handling money.

Let us learn to make our money work harder. Human beings who save can be classified into 2 broad categories. The first ones earn, save (which they invest) and then spend. For this category, saving comes as a habit and a pleasure. For them freedom means doing what they like. They do not need their professions.

The second category saves towards a particular goal. For them the EMI cheque or the SIP cheque comes with a great degree of "sacrifice". Thus it is a survivor mindset. Start saving / investing today. Put the awfully powerful tool of compounding to work. Act.

Financial goal setting:

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to", said the Cat.

"I do not much care where…." Said Alice

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go", said the Cat.

Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll.

In my experience in financial planning, I have found this to be the most important and most difficult exercise that you have to do to achieve a financial goal.

Most of us have dreams. If you put a date and time to the dream, it becomes a goal. A dream can be in the air, a goal is written down on a piece of paper.

Get into an exercise of writing your goals. Goals are what you wish to have, places to go, what you wish to read, and so on.

Enumerate your goals and let it flow freely, do not try to stop the thought process.

I wish to lose 5 kg

I wish to be a millionaire

I wish to buy a bigger house

What do you observe?

Almost all of them have some financial implication.

Are all fond wish "statements".

Goals, however, require you to be more precise, clear and have a start and end date. Let's look at some goal statements:

I wish to buy a 3 bedroom house by Jan xxxx, funded by my own funds in Chembur.

I wish to buy a blue colour Trident Star car costing ₹ 27, 00,000 by December

xxxx, fully funded by the sale of the equity mutual funds in which I am currently investing.

Financial goal setting is the process you use to set your direction in life.

Bank frauds: Parl panel may quiz PSB chiefs today

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

IN a bid to address critical issues such as financial scams and ensure accountability within the banking sector, the Parliament of India, through the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, has called for oral evidence on assurances previously given in the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

The Committee on Government Assurances, chaired by Dr. M. Thambidurai, MP, has summoned banking secretary Vivek Joshi, senior officials from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Managing Directors/ Chief Executive Officers of various Public Sector Banks. The banks include the State Bank of India, Indian Bank, Punjab National Bank, Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, and Indian Overseas Bank. The banks have to give oral evidence related to 2018 banking scam cases.

According to the Finance Ministry written reply to Rajya Sabha query as on 27 March 2018 bank fraud cases exceeded ₹1,000 crore, implicating multiple banks across the country. These cases are under CBI investigation.

"Two cases involving bank fraud amount of ₹1,000 crore and above pertaining to IDBI Bank and Canara Bank are also under further investigation after filing of charge-sheets in these cases in the court of law," the Finance Ministry had said.

"10 Bank officers are under CBI investigation in 5 cases. In 7 cases, no bank officers have been named as accused in the FIR. However, complicity of bank officers is being looked into during the course of investigation," it further said. Meanwhile, in its reply dated April 3, 2018, the Finance Ministry disclosed that a staggering 292 bank scam cases were under investigation by the CBI.

Among the key findings, it was revealed that 44 prominent banks were embroiled in these illicit activities. Some of the major banks involved include State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, and many more.

Latest consumption data may lead to revision of Consumer Price Index

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

THE results of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 have led to the call for revision of existing weights of Consumer Price Index (CPI), which tracks the retail inflation. One of the key findings of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey is decreasing per capita spending on food items both among urban and rural populations.

The Survey shows that the average monthly rural spending on food items has come down from 53% of the total in 2011-12 to 42% in 2022-23. In urban areas, the monthly spending on food items has fallen from 43% in 2011-12 to 39% in 2022-23. The share of cereal in consumption has fallen from 11% in 2011-12 to 5% in 2022-23 among rural populace while the same has fallen from 6.67% to 3.64% in urban areas.

Currently, the weight of food and beverages in the Consumer Price Index is 54% for rural areas and 36% for urban areas. Weight of Cereals in rural and urban CPI is 12.35% and 9.67% respectively. With the latest findings of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, analysts believe there is a strong case for revision of the weights to different categories of goods and services in the CPI.

"This survey will finally pave the way for revising the existing CPI weights as per the new consumption template of rural and urban households. However, there is still some time before the CPI series can be updated," says Madhavi Arora, lead economist at Emkay Global Financial Services. Arora says, back-to-back surveys need to be completed before the CPI index can be overhauled.

The second survey is likely to be completed in July 2024. And accounting for time lag to compile results and make appropriate changes, the new CPI series could take another one year from then.

According to Arora, the urbanisation of the rural economy has continued in the decade with a lower share of food compared to non-food (and cereals) in their consumption basket. "We note the share of food saw a reverse trend in 2009-10 (increased), but resumed its downtrend since then," says Arora.

The survey also shows the gap between urban and rural monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) reducing sharply over the last decade. The Urban MPCE in 2022-23 was ₹6,459, 71% higher than the rural MPCE of Rs 3,773. In 2011-12, the difference was 84% of rural MPCE.

₹2k notes withdrawal: CiC growth dips to 3.7% in Feb

PTI @ Mumbai

THE growth in currency in circulation decelerated to 3.7% for the week ended February 9 from 8.2% a year ago, reflecting the impact of the decision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to withdraw ₹2,000 banknotes.

Currency-in-circulation (CiC) refers to notes and coins in circulation, while currency with the public comprises notes and coins in circulation minus cash with banks.

According to the RBI, commercial banks have reported double-digit growth in deposits in January, which too can be attributed to withdrawal of ₹2,000 currency notes.

The growth of Reserve Money (RM), as per the RBI data, decelerated to 5.8% as on February 9, 2024 from 11.2% a year ago (8.8% adjusted for the first-round impact of change in Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR).

Components of RM include CiC, banks' deposits in RBI and other deposits with the central bank. The growth in CiC , the largest component of RM, decelerated to 3.7% from 8.2% a year ago, reflecting the withdrawal of ₹2,000 banknotes, according to the RBI.

On May 19, 2023, RBI announced withdrawal of ₹2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation. As on January 31, nearly 97.5% of the ₹2,000 banknotes were returned to the banking system, and only about ₹8,897 crore worth of such notes are still with the public.

The total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation was ₹ 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of ₹2,000 banknotes was announced. Public and entities holding such notes were initially asked to either exchange or deposit them in bank accounts by September 30, 2023. The deadline was later extended to October 7, 2023. Deposit and exchange services at bank branches were discontinued on October 7, 2023.

Starting October 8, 2023 individuals have been provided with the choice of either exchanging the currency or having the equivalent sum credited to their bank accounts at the 19 offices of RBI.

Bring law to free sports from politicians, bureaucrats: Gopi

Pullela Gopichand on Sunday was critical of politicians and bureaucrats running sports administration in the country. "One legislation, I would really love to see is the government telling that we are not under bureaucrats, sports administration is not under politicians. But sports is managed by professionals & people who know stuff and who are sportspersons," he said.

India batter shows what he can offer with gritty 90 to lift hosts before bowlers take over on Day 3

Jurel misses century but leaves giant impression

GOMESH S @ Ranchi

Joe Root congratulates India batter Dhruv Jurel on Day 3 of the fourth Test | AP

SCOREBOARD

England 1st innings 353. India 1st innings (o/n 219-7): Jurel b Hartley 90, Yadav b Anderson 28, Deep lbw Bashir 9, Siraj not out 0. **Extras** (b12, lb5, nb6) 23. **Total** (103.2 ovs) 307. **FoWs:** 1-4, 2-86, 3-112, 4-130, 5-161, 6-171, 7-177, 8-253, 9-293, 10-307. **Bowling:** Anderson 18-4-48-2, Robinson 13-0-54-0 (nb6), Bashir 44-8-119-5, Hartley 27.2-6-68-3, Root 1-0-1-0. **England 2nd innings:** Crawley b Yadav 60, Duckett c Sarfaraz b Ashwin 15, Pope lbw Ashwin 0, Root lbw Ashwin 11, Bairstow c Patidar b Jadeja 30, Stokes b Yadav 4, Foakes c and b Ashwin 17, Hartley c Sarfaraz b Yadav 7, Robinson lbw Yadav 0, Bashir not out 1, Anderson c Jurel b Ashwin 0. **Extras** 0. **Total** (53.5 ovs) 145. **FoWs:** 1-19, 2-19, 3-65, 4-110, 5-120, 6-120, 7-133, 8-133, 9-145, 10-145. **Bowling:** Ashwin 15.5-0-51-5, Jadeja 20-5-56-1, Siraj 3-0-16-0, Yadav 15-2-22-4. **India 2nd innings:** Rohit batting 24, Jaiswal batting 16. **Extras** 0. **Total** (0 wickets, 8 ovs) 40. **Bowling:** Root 4-0-17-0, Hartley 3-0-22-0, Bashir 1-0-1-0.

DHRUV Jurel was distraught. He could not believe his luck. After missing out on a milestone on his debut in Rajkot — he had got out for 46 — the youngster once again fell just short of another, here at the JSCA International Stadium on Sunday. Just when it seemed like he would reach his first Test century, he had just missed out with Tom Hartley cleaning him up for 90 as India were all out for 307.

The 23-year-old from UP was looking down before looking around with a sense of disbelief. That's when a familiar face came around to offer comfort. That familiar face was Joe Root, the centurion for England on the opening day and his Rajasthan Royals (RR) teammate in the Indian Premier League.

While Jurel has been exhibiting signs of promise in the ongoing Test series, Root was one of the first high-profile names to recognise his talent. Before leaving the RR camp last year, the former England skipper had indicated the same to the youngster. 'I know that you are going to be the superstar. I can see the potential in you' were Root's words. Jurel made his debut in Rajkot against Root last week. But Saturday was the first time the duo went up against each other on the field. Just one ball from Root to Jurel, which the latter worked out for a single.

Ask Root if there was any on-field chatter between the two, the England No 4, with 31 Test hundreds, was candid. "I think he got told off for having a chat with me last week. But no, he is a lovely lad and a very talented young player. He has kept really well and I know he is a very talented player. We see a very different side of his game and he could actually come and blast the ball at six and seven down the order and he scores from ball one. To be able to transfer those skills in this format as well, he has got a very sound technique, he has options to his game," he said.

When Root said it, Jurel was batting on 30 and India were 219/7, trailing by 134 runs. A comeback in this Test seemed like a stretch with only Mohammed Siraj and Akash Deep left in the line-up. However, with Kuldeep Yadav showing solidity, Jurel scrapped some runs. Together, they kept working away singles and doubles. England's total was still far away and there was no point in making a reckless mistake. The duo added 76 runs from 202 balls before Kuldeep fell. Jurel was 49 at that point and could well have been stranded without getting to his fifty.

But Jurel, this time, demonstrated what he's all about.

With Akash Deep for company, he nudged Hartley for a single to get to his fifty. The celebration followed — bat raise and a salute — as a tribute to his dad who is a Kargil war veteran. But once the moment passed, Jurel got back to the job at hand. The duo kept batting normally for a while as Jurel held strike as much as possible. He was compact when it came to shot making, showing nerves of steel. And when the opportunity presented itself, he opted for big shots. A four against Hartley and then back-to-back lofts against Shoaib Bashir on a pitch that was not easy to bat on. And he was able to do so because he was prepared.

"I believe in visualisation and manifestation. Whatever match or series, one or two weeks prior, I start preparations looking at the bowling line-up who will bowl and how I will play them. I visualised that whoever is the bowler — Anderson, Mark Wood, Hartley, whatever they bowl, I see their videos where they bowl and where my zones are and how I can hit them," he said after the day's play.

Akash Deep got out and Jurel switched to T20 mode. He went after Hartley — another six and a four followed — to get to 90. Siraj survived the next over, giving the youngster the best chance to get to the landmark. On the second ball of the 104th over, Hartley pitched one on middle and leg, which turned sharply to hit the stumps.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

SPINNING THE SAME RECORD IN RANCHI

GOMESH S @ Ranchi

R ASHWIN was staring at a giant screen in JSCA International Stadium on Sunday afternoon again — just as he was 24 hours earlier. This time, however, he was not batting. He, surrounded by his teammates, and Joe Root were anxiously looking at the screen.

At this point, Ashwin had already grabbed, literally, the new ball from Rohit Sharma, and made an immediate impact, sending both Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope back. Zak Crawley and Root had piled on for a while with the lack of bounce on the surface and Indian spinners being rather generous bowling too many half-volleys. From 19/2, the visitors had taken their score to 65/2, extending the lead past 100.

India desperately needed a wicket and Ashwin had to step up. He had taken just one wicket in the first innings, and had realised the need to "rewire". For the kind of spinner he is, Ashwin found it difficult to extract spin on the surface. In fact, his load-up was different from what he did in the first innings and had to use a bit of variations. He was bowling with the seam facing square leg, even undercutting a little to extract more side spin of the surface. "I am someone who comes from the top and likes the ball to drop on the pitch. Somehow when I come to the Eastern part of the country I find that there is not enough bite out of the surface. The bounce is literally around shin height if I can say that, so had to bowl a lot of side spin, had to hammer into the pitch for the first part of the spell and later from the other side I felt there was a little bit more purchase. Had to rewire and it's a mental switch I had to make," he would later explain in a chat with the broadcasters.

And the change worked. He came around the wicket and the ball drifted and dipped a lot more than Root expected. As a result, he was caught falling over when the ball pitched just enough in line and turned sharply to hit Root low on the pads. The umpire did not give it out, but Ashwin convinced Rohit for a review. And it was that decision they were all anxiously waiting for.

Ravichandran Ashwin notched up his 35th Test fifer on Sunday in Ranchi | AFP

Once the three reds flashed on the giant screen, Ashwin jumped in the air, punched in delight and let out a scream. That is how much it meant to him, that is how much the wicket of Root was for India's fortunes. Once Root got out, Crawley and Jonny Bairstow took the lead forward with the England opener getting to his half-century. However, soon Kuldeep Yadav did his part as he bamboozled Crawley to clean him up. The left-arm wrist spinner then trapped Ben Stokes as the ball hit the pads before rolling into the stumps. Bairstow would give an easy catch immediately after tea and all of a sudden England had gone from 110-3 to 120-6.

As much as Ashwin continued to make hay and show his genius with the craft, Kuldeep did his part too. He was adapting to the conditions in such a way that he varied the pace and trajectories constantly based on what he was getting off the pitch. The spin duo would run through the lower order sharing nine wickets between them — Ashwin taking his 35th Test fifer. "What I loved about Kuldeep today was the way he worked on his run-up and momentum. We all know how much revs he can put on the ball, and what skill he has. The change of pace that changes the trajectory, which he is willing to do now... I think he is double the bowler that he is. Really happy for him. I just stole the fifer away from him," Ashwin praised Kuldeep.

The genius of Indian spinners apart, England did not help themselves by going into a shell nor did they adapt and play down the ground as much as Crawley or Dhruv Jurel did. The rub of green too was with India as a few umpire's call decisions went the hosts way, unlike Saturday. Once India's first inning got over, the entire match was on fast forward where from conceding first innings, the hosts got to a position of strength as they finished the day with 40/0. For India, the job is still not done. They still need another 152 runs and all England need is ten good balls.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Liverpool camp rejoices after clinching the League Cup on Sunday | AP

Van Dijk strikes late as Liverpool pocket Cup

AGENCIES @ London

LIVERPOOl won the League Cup in dramatic fashion as Virgil van Dijk's header late in extra-time sealed a 1-0 win against Chelsea at Wembley on Sunday.

Jurgen Klopp's injury-hit side finished a gruelling clash with a host of raw youngsters on the pitch, but it was their experienced captain who clinched the club's 10th League Cup triumph. Van Dijk earlier had a goal controversially disallowed by VAR, but the Dutch defender pounced to nod home with just two minutes left.

It was Liverpool's first trophy following Klopp's bombshell announcement that he will step down at the end of this season.

The German will hope Liverpool's first silverware since the 2022 FA Cup will be the springboard for an incredible farewell tour.

Quadruple-chasing Liverpool sit top of the Premier League, face Southampton in the FA Cup fifth round on Wednesday and take on Sparta Prague in the Europa League last 16.

Big victory for Arsenal

Arsenal's free-scoring Premier League form continued as Newcastle were blown away 4-1 at the Emirates on Saturday to move back within two points of leaders Liverpool. Arsenal's prowess from set-pieces forced an own goal from Sven Botman before Kai Havertz, Bukayo Saka and Jakub Kiwior from another corner killed off Newcastle. On Sunday, Wolves beat Sheffield United 1-0.

Sai Kishore powers TN into Ranji SF

ENS/AGENCIES @ Chennai

A PROFESSIONAL display by Tamil Nadu enabled them to defeat Saurashtra by an innings and 33 runs on the third day of the quarterfinals of the Ranji Trophy played at Coimbatore on Sunday. Man of the Match R Sai Kishore, with 4/27 (match haul 9/93) in the second innings, was once again in his element to fashion one of the memorable wins of his career as the captain of Tamil Nadu.

Although Tamil Nadu could add only 38 runs to its overnight score of 300 runs, the 155-run lead proved decisive.

Saurashtra in their second essay, barring Cheteshwar Pujara (46), were bowled out for 122. "Very pleased with the performance of the boys. They gave a professional display and I am very excited and thrilled that our team has got to the semifinals," said Sai Kishore.

R Sai Kishore (R) picked up 4 wickets in the second innings | S SENBAGAPANDIYAN

BRIEF SCORES: Saurashtra 183 & 122 in 75.4 ovs (Pujara 46; Sai Kishore 4/27) lost to Tamil Nadu 338; Vidarbha 460 & 50 for no loss in 14 ovs vs Karnataka 286 in 90.3 ovs (Jose 82, Samarth 59; Thakur 3/48, Sarwate 3/50); Mumbai 384 & 21/1 in 12 ovs vs Baroda 348 (Jyotsnil 32, Rawat 124, Solanki 136; Mulani 4/121); Madhya Pradesh 234 & 107 in 40.5 ovs (Mantri 43; Reddy 4/28, Mohan 3/20, Sasikanth 3/20) vs Andhra 172 & 95/4 in 44 ovs (Vihari 43 batting; Agarwal 2/22).

Vidarbha in command

Nagpur: Yash Thakur and Aditya Sarwate shone bright as Vidarbha moved into a commanding position against Karnataka after swelling their lead to 224 runs on the third day their quarterfinal on Sunday.

Left-arm spinner Sarwate (3/50) and pacer Thakur (3/48) shared six wickets equally among them as Karnataka were bundled out for 286 in their first innings. It helped the hosts take a lead of 174 runs and Vidarbha closed day three at 50 for no loss in their second innings.

MP, Andhra set for a thriller

Indore: The quarterfinal between Madhya Pradesh and Andhra was evenly poised at stumps on the third day on Sunday, with both the teams having an equal opportunity to win the game. Andhra were placed precariously at 95/4 and requiring another 75 runs to win with two days left, while the task for the hosts MP would be to take the remaining six wickets.

Lead for Mumbai

Mumbai: Mumbai were ahead by 57 runs at stumps after Baroda conceded a slender lead in the first innings, despite tons from Shashwat Rawat and Vishnu Solanki on Day 3 of their ongoing quarterfinal.

Kerala Blasters fight back to overcome Goa

AGENCIES @ Kochi

KERALA Blasters FC sprung a late surprise by hammering four goals in the second half to defeat FC Goa by 4-2 to secure their first win after three games in the Indian Super League (ISL) on Sunday. The Kochi-based outfit thus stormed into the fourth spot, inflicting a third straight defeat against FC Goa.

Kerala Blasters secured their 1st win after 3 games on Sunday | A SANESH

It was a game of two halves, with the visitors heading into the halftime break with a two-goal lead, powered by early strikes by Rowllin Borges and Mohammed Yasir. Whilst Borges drew the first blood through a volley from a corner kick in the sixth minute, Yasir converted a squared-up pass from Noah Sadaoui, who drove the ball up on the left flank and laid up a delivery for the young attacking midfielder.

The Gaurs arguably took comfort with that early advantage though, with Blasters making them pay in the second half. Daisuke Sakai led the response, pulling off a fantastic free-kick from the left-sided edge of the box to beat an outstretched Arshdeep Singh to drill the ball into the top right corner. The goal, more importantly, the nature of it, swayed the game in the favour of the home side, with Ivan Vukomanovic and his pep talk in the break paying rich dividends later on.

EXPRESS READ

Mehuli, Anish win in natl shooting trials

BHOPAL: India's Paris Olympic quota holders enjoyed a favourable outing in the first finals of the national rifle-pistol selection trials 3 and 4, with West Bengal's Mehuli Ghosh (women's 10m rifle) and Haryana's Anish Bhanwala (men's 25m rapid fire pistol) ending up winners here. Army marksman Ganga Singh bucked the trend in the day's final competition, winning the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event with plenty to spare.

Thompson lifts maiden ATP crown

LOS CABOS (MEXICO): Australia's Jordan Thompson defeated Casper Ruud to seal the first ATP title of his career with a 6-3, 7-6 (4) victory in the Los Cabos Open final in Mexico on Saturday. Thompson — who had knocked out top seed Alexander Zverev in a marathon semi-final battle that finished in the early hours of Saturday morning — once again dug deep to overcome fourth-seeded Ruud.

Archer Deepika returns to bag two gold

BAGHDAD: Former World No 1 archer Deepika Kumari returned to winning ways 14 months after embracing motherhood as she bagged two gold in India's rich haul of 14 medals at the Asia Cup Leg 1 here on Sunday. Indian archers dominated the field on the final day, winning all the seven finals on the offer. They also won three silver medals. Overall, India ended with 10 gold medals, three silver and one bronze.

After free coaching from legend, Asha delivers for RCB

KALYANI MANGALE @ Chennai

MARCH 15, 2023, was a special day for the Smriti Mandhana-led Royal Challengers Bangalore. After five back-to-back losses to start the season, they finally had a win on the board at the DY Patil Stadium.as bowlers set up that win for the franchise. Asha Sobhana played her part with two wickets. Even social media fell in love with her Hang Loose Celebration.

One person who was massively impressed with Asha's bowling then was former India international, Laxman Sivaramakrishnan. "I am available to coach Asha the leg spinner free of cost because I believe she is a natural talent and very important to know what they are doing right and do it consistently. She could be a match-winner for India #WPL2023." Sivaramakrishnan spotted the talent and wanted to help Asha unlock her potential.

"I went on Twitter and offered to coach her free of cost because there are not too many good leg spinners around in world cricket. If I can help somebody, why not? She came on about three weeks ago to Chennai when I was free for three days and she went to play in the WPL", Sivaramakrishnan told this daily after Asha took five wickets for Bangalore to help her team beat UP Warriorz by two runs in a close finish in the Women's Premier League.

Asha Sobhana claimed five wickets against UP Warriorz on Saturday | AFP

After the first season with the franchise, where she featured in five matches and took five wickets, Asha was aware of the challenges at that elite level where one has to show up, again and again, to make their mark. Sivaramakrishnan was also aware of her talent, the need was to make it all count on the biggest stage possible. "It was about making small technical corrections and then how to approach the game and visualization. (We focussed on) the technical and mental part of the game. She grasped everything very quickly and she started brilliantly in the WPL," he mentioned.

And the skill and temperament were on display from Asha with her team in desperate need of wickets. Even when it felt like UP were closing in on a win. Asha bowled a dream over to take three wickets in it, including that of Harris, while giving away just two runs to keep Bangalore in the hunt.

The work that went in with technical corrections and visualization with Sivaramakrishnan helped the already talented bowler. "To get a five-wicket haul, especially in the T20 game, is an outstanding achievement, but she put in a lot of hard work," he added.

Fresh off her match-winning spell, Asha was nothing but grateful for Sivaramakrishnan's vital inputs. "Laxman Sir offered me free coaching. I went to Chennai and trained with him," she told the media after winning the Player of the match award. "It is something I am going to remember forever in my life. I'm thankful to Laxman sir," said Asha.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

FOURSOME INDIA

The Indian men's hockey team blanked lower-ranked Ireland 4-0 to end their home leg of the FIH Pro League campaign on a high in Rourkela on Sunday | SHAMIM QURESHY

With several emerging landscapes within the legal domain, can Cyber Law become the new attraction in upcoming years? **Lovely Majumdar** spoke to experts to understand and offer students insight into a prospective choice for their career

IN THE PURVIEW OF CYBER LAW

WHEN it comes to technological developments, the world has embarked on an era that will surely witness intermittent periods of major technological revolutions. Don't believe us? Just look at what artificial intelligence (AI) research organisation OpenAI has done with ChatGPT. But if technology remains unchecked, the repercussions might be severe. Already, as per a study, India is the 80th most targeted country worldwide in cybercrime.

Hence, there must be a set of established laws to mitigate the effects of untethered technology that can create conditions of adversity. But looking at such opportunities that would emerge in the coming times, especially for the students riveted with the idea of studying law, do they know about the upcoming trends of the changing scenarios within legal education? Here's how experts weigh in on this.

Technology and Law

"Over time, with innovations, the scope has considerably broadened," says Professor Aman Gupta of the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (WBNUJS), Kolkata. According to Professor Gupta, when it comes to technology law, it is not restricted to cyber commerce and digital records, but also regulates AI, digital payments, cryptocurrency, social media intermediaries and more. It includes novel application of existing spheres of law, such as copyright law, banking law, competition law, gambling laws to online transactions.

When it comes to the increment of scope in 2024, he says that the existing Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act), has its limitations but a proposal for its replacement with the Digital India Act will contain provisions relating to digital government, open internet, online safety and trust along with regulation of intermediaries, accountability and emerging technologies.

A Law-tastic career

But how can this be a lucrative career option? To this, Dr Rupal Rautdesai, Professor and Research Advisor of Symbiosis Law School, Pune, notes the rise in types of cyber crimes such as hacking, phishing, identity theft, cyberbullying, and cyberstalking affecting individuals. Daily, various organisations report several online legal infractions, breaches of confidential information, violations of data privacy law, cyber extortion, and frauulence in social media. To this, Prof Gupta adds that there has been a surge of several law firms and practitioners who advise clients if such situations arise, and not only this, companies dealing with technology will engage lawyers who can advise on issues pertaining to company laws, employment laws, mergers and acquisitions, and lending transactions, thereby, making their domain a successful one.

A helping hand

As per data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on December 3, 2023, India witnessed a rise of 24 per cent in cyber crimes registered in 2022 as compared to 2021. Since digital crime is on the rise, especially in countries like India, *EdexLive* inquired how an expert in Cyber Law can extend help to the masses. Dr Rautdesai says that an expert in the field of Cyber Law can advise, and guide individuals and organisations on data protection, any kind of cyber security breach, prosecute and defend cases, conduct public seminars for digital literacy and so on.

The WBNUJS professor talks of other legal aid services that are being run under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority, which provides free legal aid to persons from marginalised communities, women and children, and persons below a certain income level. But on the other hand, he says that there is minimal information on pro-bono work relating to cyber laws that has been undertaken. "I believe that this is a space that requires further development in India. If you look abroad, there are specialised pro-bono legal services, such as the Harvard Law School's Cyberlaw Clinic, which provides services to clients on issues relating to cyber law while also enabling students to gain practical experiences. Such a dedicated space is slowly developing in the Indian context," says Gupta. In addition to this, he names a legal services organisation, Software Freedom Law Center (SLFC), that has brought together a community of lawyers — Digital Defenders Network, who are trained to provide pro bono legal services to citizens on cyber law issues.

Legal Tech, good or bad?

With the intervention of technology, and the surge of legal tech entrepreneurial ventures that may play a role in bringing a new change within the legal landscape, one may wonder about the renewed role of lawyers. Prof Gupta says that such concerns are understandable as AI has certainly become a player in the market. But he also says, "It is going to be the lawyers leading the technology in providing solutions, much like it has done for several decades now."

He adds that there have been several legal search engines, powered by national language processing algorithms, that help in finding case laws from various national and international courts, and several AI tools have also emerged but he cites an incident in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York, where it was seen that AI tools can hallucinate, that is, generate fictitious cases and information.

The professor further advocates for the use of technology in the deliverance of tasks with efficient results, especially with the identification of key legal risks in a transaction, where he says that such processes can be automated and would reduce the time required but he emphasises that human intervention would still be needed to assess the relevance and the hierarchy of the risks. The Symbiosis professor also says that a full-fledged adoption of AI tools would still be filled with challenges as there will be resistance to it but legal professionals will also be trained and upskilled in a way to work in concordance and lawyers will need to ensure that the deployment of technology is done fairly.

CYBER CRIMES ARE ON THE RISE IN INDIA

States (2020)	2020	States (2021)	2021	States (2022)	2022
Uttar Pradesh	11,097	Telangana	10,303	Telangana	15,297
Karnataka	10,741	Uttar Pradesh	8,829	Karnataka	12,556
Maharashtra	5,496	Karnataka	8,136	Uttar Pradesh	10,117
Telangana	5,024	Maharashtra	5,562	Maharashtra	8,249
Assam	3,530	Assam	4,846	Andhra Pradesh	2,341
Odisha	1,931	Odisha	2,036	Tamil Nadu	2,082
Andhra Pradesh	1,899	Andhra Pradesh	1,875	Odisha	1,983
Bihar	1,512	Gujarat	1,536	Rajasthan	1,833
Rajasthan	1,354	Rajasthan	1,504	Assam	1,733
Gujarat	1,283	Bihar	1,413	Bihar	1,621

INDIAN STATES AND THE CRIME RATES THEY HAVE RECORDED OVER THE YEARS

Cyber Stalking and Bullying of Women and Children

When it comes to such incidents and women, most of them tend to go unacknowledged due to various forms of concealed violence and harassment. As per the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau, Maharashtra reported the maximum number of cases, that is, 581 in the year 2022, with Telangana next in line with 280 reported cases. The cumulative cases that India reported in the year 2022 stood at a total of 1,471 cases.

State	Number of cases reported
Maharashtra	581
Telangana	280
Andhra Pradesh	136
Madhya Pradesh	82
Rajasthan	80
Kerala	49
Gujarat	48
Tamil Nadu	30
Haryana	28
Punjab	26

Prof Dr Rupal Rautdesai Research Advisor at Symbiosis Law School, Pune

Prof Aman Gupta Assistant Professor (Law and Technology), West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata

TOTAL OFFENCES UNDER IT ACT (2022)

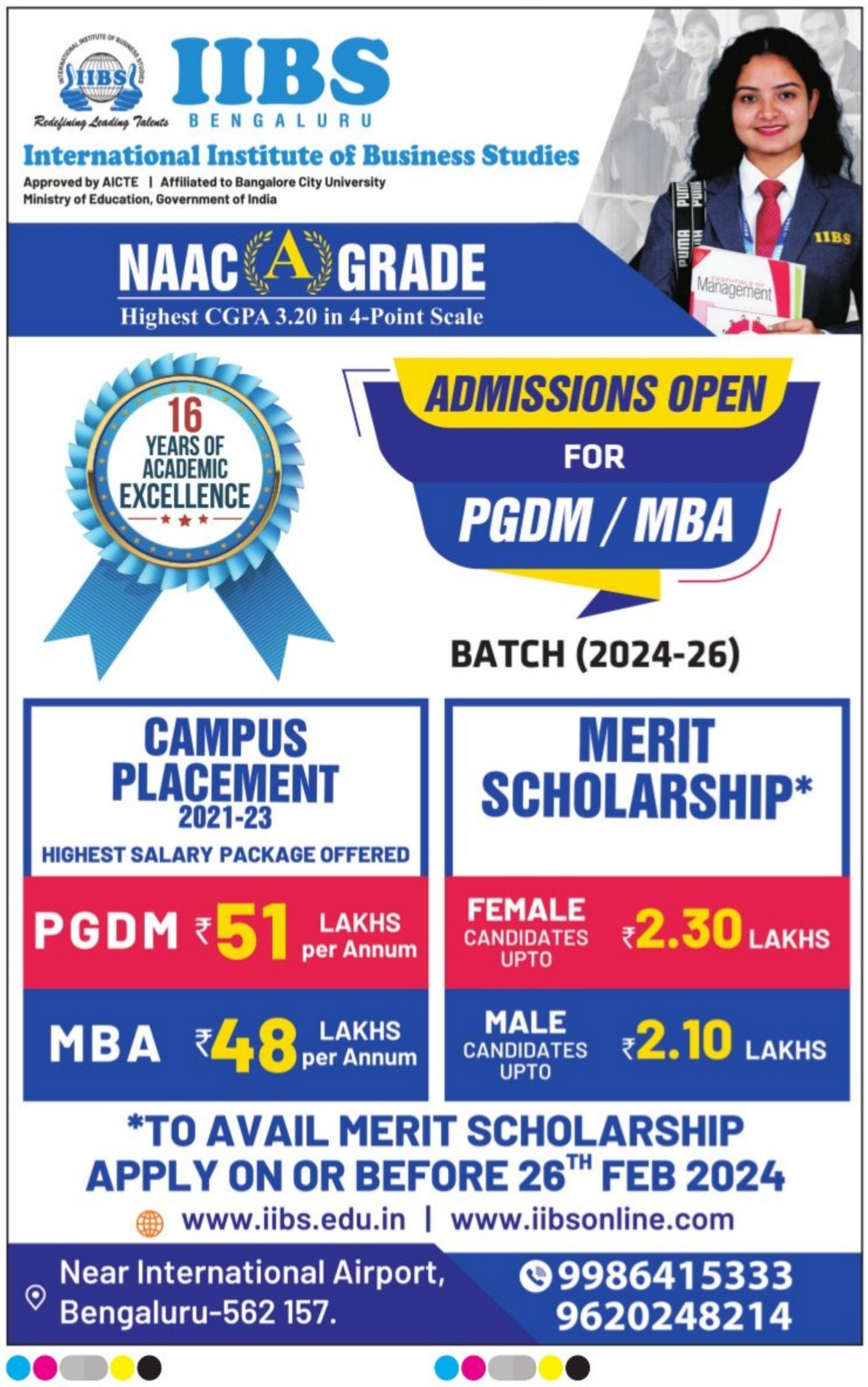
MOTIVES OF CYBER CRIME

According to data published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), several reasons were listed as to why these crimes are committed, with fraudulent purposes being the topmost reason. In the year 2022, the state of Karnataka reported the highest number of fraudulent cyber crime cases (11,025). Here is a list of other states

TOP FIVE MOTIVES BEHIND COMMITTING CRIMES FROM STATES ACROSS INDIA

stats time

Total Number of Cases	
42,710 FRAUD	857 PERSONAL REVENGE
3,648 EXTORTION	3,434 SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
	1,902 CAUSING DISREPUTE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DAY'S DIARY

First web browser

In 1991, Tim Berners-Lee introduced WorldWideWeb, the first practical web browser. The first version in 1990 using a NeXT computer

RE-NAMED NEXUS

WorldWideWeb, later renamed Nexus, was the first program to use both the file transfer protocol and hypertext transfer protocol, another Berners-Lee invention

IN PUBLIC

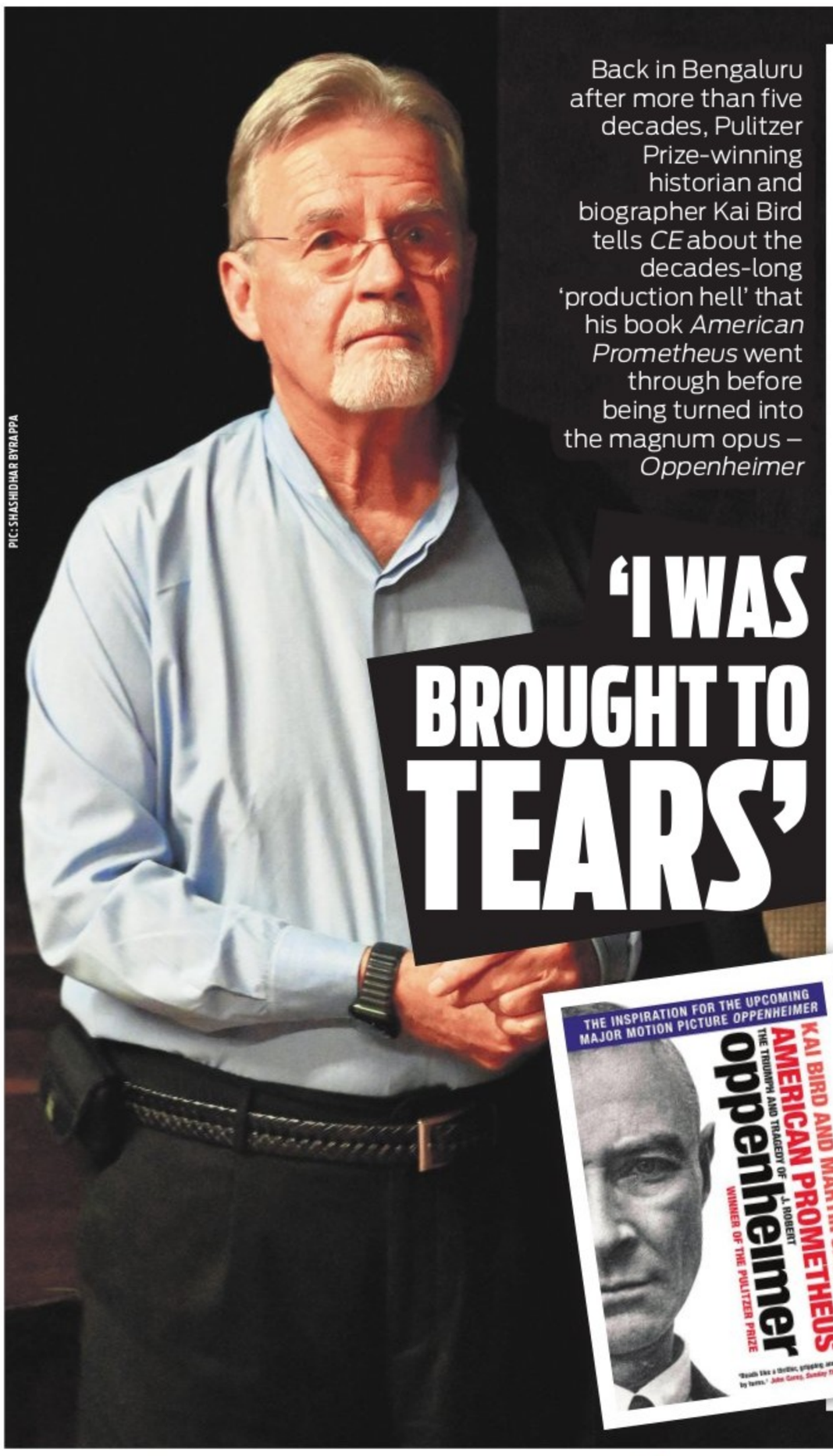
In 1993, a team at the University of Illinois' National Center for Supercomputing Applications released Mosaic, the first browser to become popular

MASTERMIND

Berners-Lee was born in London in 1955. From a young age, he enjoyed selectronics and earned a degree in physics from the University of Oxford

CE's guide to happenings in the city

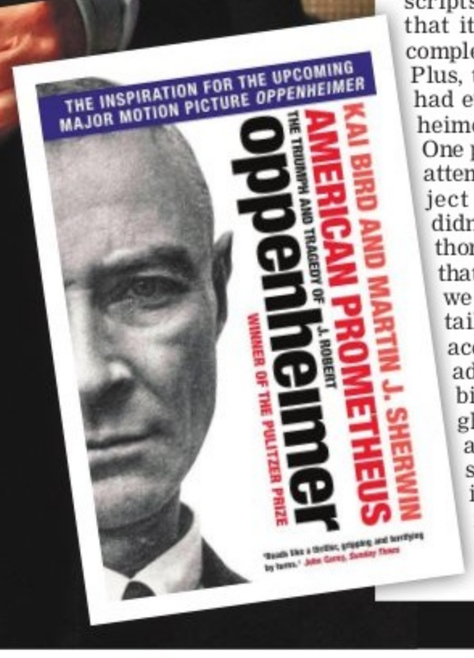
PG 2



PIC: SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Back in Bengaluru after more than five decades, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and biographer Kai Bird tells *CE* about the decades-long 'production hell' that his book *American Prometheus* went through before being turned into the magnum opus – *Oppenheimer*

'I WAS BROUGHT TO TEARS'


THE INSPIRATION FOR THE UPCOMING MAJOR MOTION PICTURE OPPENHEIMER
KAI BIRD AND MARTIN J. SHERWIN
AMERICAN PROMETHEUS
THE TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY OF J. ROBERT
oppenheimer
WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

DESE GOWDA

CHRISTOPHER Nolan's 2023 magnum opus *Oppenheimer* was not merely a blockbuster, but part of a cultural obsession that engulfed the world last year. A cinematic masterpiece – that explores the life of J Robert Oppenheimer, the 'father of the atomic bomb', and his struggle to reconcile scientific breakthrough with its devastating consequences – the making of the blockbuster was nearly as fraught as the Manhattan Project itself. Recently in Bengaluru, **Kai Bird**, co-author of the Pulitzer-winning *American Prometheus*, on which the film is based, recalls the decades-long, 'production hell' that the project had to overcome.

"Even before it won the Pulitzer, it caught the attention of a major Hollywood director and was optioned for adaptation," Bird recounts, adding, "Marty [Sherwin; co-author] and I were thrilled; it's not every day a 720-page book gets this opportunity. Four years passed, a script was written, but it turned out to be rather dull. That attempt fell through, and another party took over the rights."

The years ticked by, punctuated by disappointing scripts. "The feedback was that it was too historical, complex, and controversial. Plus, they questioned who had ever heard of Oppenheimer," says Bird wryly. One particular Hollywood attempt at making the subject more 'interesting' didn't go well with the authors. "Marty and I found that script so flawed that we compiled a memo detailing 108 historical inaccuracies," he shares, adding that it included bizarre elements like a ghost reciting poetry and a hallucinatory scene where Oppenheimer imagines poisoning Edward Teller.

It was only in 2021, nearly 15 years after *American Prometheus* first evoked Hollywood interest, that the duo heard that Christopher Nolan's next project would be about Oppenheimer. "We weren't sure if it would be based on our book. Following inquiries by our agent, I received a call for a meeting with Nolan. He was unlike any other Hollywood director I'd met – down-to-earth and intelligent in a quiet intimidating fashion," Bird recalls, adding, "He mentioned reading our book in March 2021 and writing a 200-page screenplay over the next five months. The meeting left Marty and I optimistic. But tragically, he passed away soon after, never meeting Nolan, but aware that the film might finally materialise."

A still from the film

What did Bird think when he finally got to see the film? "I was deeply moved. Nolan had accepted two of my suggestions, and the film was a major artistic achievement and quite faithful to the book. Watching it alone, I was brought to tears, thinking of what Marty would have thought of it," shares the 72-year-old, who stresses the story's deep contemporary resonance. "Sam Altman, a pioneer in the field of Artificial Intelligence, recently suggested that we are on the verge of another 'Oppenheimer moment'. What he means is that we should be trying to regulate this new tech and wrestle with some philosophical problems it represents. Exactly the way Oppenheimer was trying to wrestle with the introduction of the atomic age," he shares, adding, "Oppenheimer wanted us to pay attention to scientists. Unfortunately, because of what happened to him during the McCarthy period, it sent a message to all scientists to not get out of their narrow lane of expertise. Don't pretend to be a public intellectual, don't talk about politics or policy because they could come after you and destroy you. As a consequence, we have very few public intellectuals who are full-blown scientists. That's incredible since we're in a world drenched in tech and science."

Meanwhile, Bird spent a few of his formative years as a teenager in South India. Speaking of his experience about being back in Bengaluru, Bird says, "It is great being back for the first time after 1968. I actually spent the last two years of my high school at the Kodaikanal [International] School in Tamil Nadu and it is terrific to be able to revisit South India. That experience, growing up in the Middle East, and India helped mould me as a journalist and later as a biographer which gave me a multicultural outlook to the world. And that, no doubt, informed my writing."

GRUB HUB

Aslam Gafoor (@aslamgafoor) is a hospitality professional with experience in business development, sales and marketing with well-known hotels, and food and beverage companies. A few of his passions are travel, food and wine, and he enjoys sharing these experiences as a columnist.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE* on Monday. The first prize winner will receive a voucher worth ₹2,000 from Oriah Brewgarden**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Tungrymbai
2) Sidu
3) Kuleputtu

FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

1) Nikhita
2) Anilkumar Janardanan
3) Suja V

CITY READ

Ezee Cycles launches two electric bicycle variants in city

Ezee Cycles is now venturing into the electric mobility space with indigenous and purpose-built electric bicycles that has been developed in-house. "We are passionate about bringing green technologies to life. We are launching the Gaur E1, E coon s1 to create a cleaner, greener and more connected urban environment. Our electric cycles produce zero emissions, contributing to leaner air and a healthier planet," said Purushottam Naik, founder. The key feature of this cycle is using a Li-Ion rechargeable battery, detachable for charging. They produce 30-40nm Torque with a range of 50km with full charge and up to 70km with pedal assist feature. The RALSON Balloon tyres give extra support to the suspension to make your ride easy. It also has seven gears for better ride conditions.

EZEE CYCLES

PICS: NAGARAJA GADEKAL

The Royal Echo performs at the Japanese National Day Reception to celebrate the Emperor's 64th birthday

(Second from right) Nakane Tsutomu, Consul General of Japan in Bengaluru with guests at the celebrations

MB Patil, Minister for Commerce & Industries, Infrastructure, with Tsutomu

(From left) Limor Bletter, Deputy Chief of Mission of Consulate General of Israel to South India, Tammy Ben-Haim, Consul General of Israel in Bengaluru with TV Mohandas Pai, chairman, Manipal Global Education

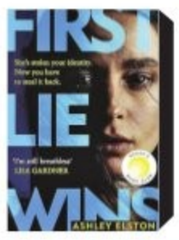
Sushi, saké and high spirits

Bengalureans said 'Kampai' at an evening of free-flowing saké and conversations at the Japanese National Day Reception 2024 on Friday. To celebrate the birthday of His Majesty The Emperor of Japan, Nakane Tsutomu, Consul General of Japan in Bengaluru led the evening which included a high-energy music performance by Royal Echo and a Karate demo.

"His Majesty Emperor Naruhito turned 64 and is the 126th Emperor of Japan. Having acceded in 2019, His Majesty will soon celebrate his sixth year on the throne," said Tsutomu, adding, "Bengaluru is a key driving factor of the Indian economy. The city is attracting more and more attention in Japan. Some Japanese companies have established R&D centres in the city and many Japanese delegations are frequenting the city. I arrived in June 2022, it has been a year and a half since I took up my current position. I have now reached the halfway point. I am grateful for the warm welcome."

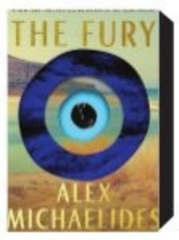
A karate demonstration

BOOK NOOK



First Lie Wins
by Ashley Elston

Evie Porter has everything a nice, Southern girl could want: a perfect, doting boyfriend, a house with a white picket fence and a garden, and a fancy group of friends. The only catch: Evie Porter doesn't exist.



The Fury
by Alex Michaelides

Lana Farrar is a reclusive ex-movie star and one of the most famous women in the world. Every year, she invites her closest friends to escape the English weather and spend Easter on her idyllic private Greek island.

The Heiress
by Rachel Hawkins

When Ruby McTavish Callahan Woodward Miller Kenmore dies, she's not only North Carolina's richest woman, she's also its most notorious. The victim of a famous kidnapping as a child and a widow four times over, Ruby ruled the tiny town of Tavistock from Ashby House, her family's estate high in the Blue Ridge mountains.

Only If You're Lucky
by Stacy Willingham

Lucy Sharpe is larger than life. Magnetic, addictive. Bold and dangerous. Especially for Margot, who meets Lucy at the end of their freshman year at a liberal arts college in South Carolina. Margot is the shy one, the careful one, always the sidekick, and never the center of attention.

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

Meditative Art

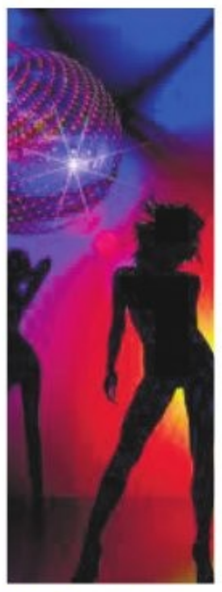
Delve into a creative calm as you design intricate mandalas, guided by meditation that brings inner harmony. Escape the chaos of daily life and find serenity in this mindful exploration of self-expression.

WHEN: Feb 26, 1pm | **WHERE:** Small World, Koramangala | **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Celebrating Music

A Western classical orchestral concert showcasing the works of Bach, Tchaikovsky, among others, will be performed by the Bangalore City Chamber Orchestra.

WHEN: Feb 26, 6.45pm
WHERE: Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Malleswaram
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com



Girl Gang Meet

From belting out tunes to boogieing on the dance floor, it's a day of laughter, music, and endless girl talk. This also includes a free coffee.

WHEN: Feb 26, 4pm
WHERE: Casa Karaoke, JP Nagar **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Lego Time

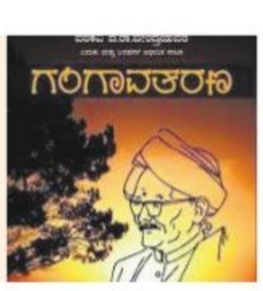
This is a fun-filled programme that provides a no opportunity to play with a the LEGO collection according to your own desires. You can create something of your own or choose from many of exciting themes.

WHEN: Feb 26, 5pm onwards | **WHERE:** AZPIRE. IN Mind Gym, Trinity Enclave, Old Madras Road | **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Poetry on Stage

Gangavatharana is inspired by the poems of DR Bendre, known by his pen name Ambikatanayadatta. His poems are one of the most popular works of Kannada literature, influenced by Vedic literature and nature.

WHEN: Feb 27, 7.30pm onwards
WHERE: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com



Art Exhibition

The Masters & The Modern is a tribute to the luminary figures of Indian art such as VS Gaitonde, MF Husain, FN Souza and Ganesh Pyne. This collection spans the legacy of Indian art's pioneers alongside the dynamic contributions of other leading artists.

WHEN: Feb 26, 10am onwards
WHERE: Gallery G, Lavelle Road
DETAILS: 080-22219275

Daily Dose of Laughter

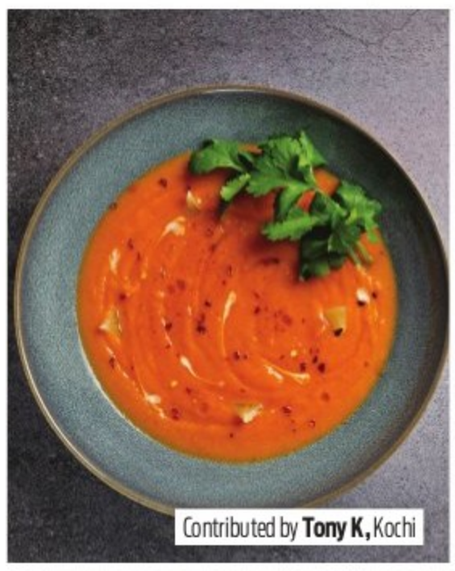
Haha hehe at an evening where comedians from across the city will perform. **WHEN:** Feb 26, 8.30pm **WHERE:** Breads and Banter, Marathahalli **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

MYRIAD COLOURS

Parents of Shwetlana Mehta, a US-based artist, explains some of the paintings of their daughter, exhibited at The Haat of Art, at Jayamahal Palace on Sunday | ALLEN EGENUSE J

QUICK FIX

RED MINT PEA SOUP



Contributed by **Tony K,** Kochi

INGREDIENTS

- **Frozen peas:** 1/2kg
- **Tomato:** 2-3
- **Chopped fresh mint**
- **Cream**
- **Pepper:** 1
- **Garlic cloves**
- **Vinegar (red wine vinegar preferred):** 1 tsp
- **Vegetable bouillon powder:** 1 tbsp

METHOD

- Leave the peas to defrost.
- Chop tomatoes into small portions.
- Tip them into a blender (save a spoonful).
- Pour hot water; add the tomatoes.
- Add a handful of mint and vegetable bouillon powder.
- Add a pinch of sugar, garlic and 1 tbsp of vinegar. Blend until smooth. Leave it to cool down.
- Serve with cream, chopped mint, a spoonful of peas

What's cooking in your kitchen?

We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com

FIT BIT

PARIGHASANA VARIATION LUNGE
(GATE POSE VARIATION LUNGE)

This is a variation of Parighasana (Gate Pose) and it works as a preparatory pose. This can also be practised for building endurance. This variation brings the optimal opening of the hips and the quadriceps, while also using the psoas muscles to go deeper into the posture.

STEPS

- From Ustrasana, relax back in Vajrasana. Take a few breaths.
- Inhale and come to sit again on the knees and the shins raising the torso up.
- Inhale, bring the right foot forward and place it on the floor while bending the knee.
- Again, inhale and place the right hand above the right thigh. Exhale, raise the left hand up stretching to the maximum.
- Remain here in Parighasana Variation Lunge.
- Stay here for about 6 breaths focusing on balancing the body and ensuring the body is also light and calm.
- Make sure the pressure of the foot is not too much.
- To release the pose, bring your hands back and move into the original pose.
- Repeat the pose with your left foot forward, raising the right hand up.
- Finally, come back to the original pose and then relax.

BENEFITS

- Stretches the back of the leg.
- Opens the hip flexors and strengthens the hip extensors.
- Helps to stretch the psoas muscles.
- Helps to open the shoulders and chest.
- Strengthens the quadriceps, gluteus maximus, and hamstrings.
- Helps to build strength for the muscles that support the knee, and the hands, shoulders and back.
- Stretches front of the ankle and strengthens calf muscles.
- Stretches the calf muscles on the front leg.
- Engages the deep core muscles, which help create stability.
- Helps to alleviate pain by sciatica.
- Helps to improve balance.

LIMITATIONS

People with injuries to the lower back, quadriceps, groin, knees, hips, or spine, have HBP or problems in heart and while lifting arms, avoid this.

Those who have had a recent hip replacement surgery, neck injury or are prone to headaches, don't look up.

Those with injury to foot, toe, or Achilles tendon, do with modifications.

By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

CHERAN'S JOURNEY (Tamil, series)

The series revolves around Ashok, the chairman of an automobile company, who is in search of a candidate for an important post. Exploring the concept of 'journey', the show delves into various human emotions, internal struggles, camaraderie, rivalry, love, and betrayal.

Cast: R Sarathkumar, Prasanna, Aari Arujunan, Kalaiyarasan

- **Watch on:** Sony LIV

PER-ILLOOR PREMIER LEAGUE (Malayalam, series)

Set in the fictional town of Perilloor in Kerala, the series revolves around Malavika who ends up becoming the Panchayat president of Perilloor Grama Panchayat after a series of unexpected events.

Cast: Nikhila Vimal, Aju Varghese, Sunny Wayne, Vijayaraghavan

- **Watch on:** Disney+ Hotstar

LOVE STORIYAAN (Hindi, series)

Each episode in the series explores different facets of love inspired by real narratives shared by the India Love Project – From intercultural unions to overcoming personal barriers and societal norms.

Cast: Twinkle Tshering, Poonam Gurung, Ankit Arora, Spandan Mukherjee

Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

SWATHI MUTTHINA MALE HANIYE (Kannada)

Set against the picturesque backdrops of Ooty and Mysuru, the film unfolds the story of Prerana, a hospice counsellor whose life takes a new turn when she befriends Aniketh, a terminally ill patient.

Cast: Sandhya Arakere, Gopalkrishna Deshpande, Rekha Kudligi, Arpith Adyar

- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

CRUSHED (Hindi, series)

This coming-of-age series, set in the scenic backdrop of Dehradun, delves into the lives of teenagers Aadhya, Prateek, Sahil, and Jasmine, exploring themes like academic pressures, friendship, romance, and self-discovery.

Cast: Aadhya Anand, Arjun Deswal, Anupriya Caroli, Urvi Singh

- **Watch on:** Amazon Mini TV

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

KSHETRAPATHI (Kannada)

An aspiring engineering student's life takes a turn when his farmer father commits suicide due to financial pressures from agricultural loans.

Cast: Naveen Shankar, Rahul Ainapur, Harsh Arjun, Achyuth Kumar

- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

KAATHAL- THE CORE (Malayalam)

Mathew, a respected figure in his town and a retired bank secretary, reluctantly enters politics. His life is soon upended after a shocking revelation by his wife Omana. The film addresses complex themes of self-denial, suppressed sexuality, and the struggle for acceptance in a conservative society.

Cast: Mammootty, Jyotika, Anagha Akku, Alex Alister

- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

FOREIGN

SWEET HOME (Korean, series)

The gripping tale blends horror with psychological drama, unfolding in an eerie, post-apocalyptic setting where people are mysteriously turning into savage monsters. Cha Hyun-soo, a reclusive high school student, finds himself trapped in his apartment building along with other residents. as they struggle to survive against the monstrous threats.

Cast: Go Min-si, Lee Si-young, Kim Hee-Jung, Song Kang

- **Watch on:** Netflix

PLAYERS (English)

Mack, a sportswriter from New York City is adept at crafting hook-up schemes with her best friend Adam. She meets Nick, a war correspondent, and decides she's ready for a serious relationship, leading to a mix of romantic and comedic situations.

Cast: Gina Rodriguez, Damon Wayans Jr., Tom Ellis, Augustus Prew

- **Watch on:** Netflix

TRACKER (English, series)

Based on Jeffery Deaver's novel The Never Game, the series revolves around Colter, a lone-wolf survivalist with exceptional tracking skills as he traverses the country aiding law enforcement and private citizens in exchange for reward money.

Cast: Justin Hartley, Mary McDonnell, Robin Weigert, Abby McEnany

- **Watch on:** Disney+ Hotstar

THIS IS ME...NOW: A LOVE STORY (English)

Intertwined with Jennifer Lopez's first studio album in a decade, the movie presents a deeply personal journey to love, depicted through Lopez's perspective.

Cast: Jennifer Lopez, Matt Walton, Dave Meyers, Ben Affleck

- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

SUBSCRIPTION	
Netflix:	₹199/month
Prime Video:	₹299/month
Jio Cinema:	₹999/year
Disney+ Hotstar:	₹899/year
Zee5:	₹699/year
Apple TV+:	₹195/month
Aha:	₹699/year
SonyLIV:	₹299/month

A ROCKING AFFAIR

A free-wheeling chat with Thermal and a Quarter, who've been transforming the rock music scene in Bengaluru since the '90s

MAHIMA ANNA JACOB

PIONEERS of the 'Bengaluru rock' genre, the band Thermal and a Quarter (TAAQ) is known for doing things their own way.

In 1996, when the nascent Indian rock music industry focused on releasing covers, TAAQ produced their own songs, each capturing the free-spiritedness of an evolving Bengaluru.

Now, ahead of the release of their ninth album, the group was in Kochi for the Freeground Music Festival. In a free-wheeling chat with *CE*, Bruce Lee Mani, Rajeev Rajagopal, Leslie Charles and Tony Das recoun their decades-long journey, the intricacies of their music-making process, and more...

TAAQ has been in the industry for over two decades now. How do you keep the momentum going?

To be precise, this October, Thermal and a Quarter will turn 28. It has been fairly easy for us. I mean, we live to do gigs and write songs. Also, we are lucky to be consistent in music-making. We find ways to keep it going.

Can you elaborate on the band's origin?

Rajeev: When the band was formed in 1996, it was just me and Bruce. We were part of the Christ College band. That's how Thermal and a Quarter came to be. Tony and Leslie joined us later, but the four of us have been together for over ten years now.

Leslie: Even before joining the band, I knew Bruce and Rajeev. They were quite popular in the city. To be honest, I wasn't familiar with their songs. During that time, I was playing for some local names in Bengaluru. My entry into TAAQ was quite random. I got a call from the duo asking me on a Friday if I could join them for a gig on Sunday. (laughs). That's how it began.

Tony: I joined the band 10 years before Leslie did. To be honest, I was a big fanboy. Back in college, I was broke and saved up whatever I had to go see their shows. After three or four years of joining the band, I had to step down as I got involved with other errands. However, in 2015, when they came to do a show, they invited me over. In the practice room, the group realised that I still knew half of their songs. That's how I rejoined.

Q&A

TAAQ is known for the genre 'Bangalore Rock.' How did this genre materialise?

No, that's not what we called the music early on. We struggled to categorise our music under one umbrella. All of us come from a different musical background and grew up in a melting pot of culture. We had a mixed bag of influences. For the first few years of our journey, we were associated with 'multi-hyphenated' definitions for our music, like progressive, jazz, blues, and so on. Later, a friend pointed out that our songs reminded him of Bengaluru. That's when we realised that we should have the name of the city as the definition of our music. That's how Bangalore rock came into form.

TAAQ was one of those few bands that wrote and produced their own songs. How did you manage that so early?

One of the factors that drove us to write our own music was taking part in college competitions. Also, limitations pushed us to be creative. I don't think we were great musicians back then. All of us learned the process along the way. We were pretty much self-taught. When compared to other bands, who had better gear and equipment, what made us different from the rest was that we could write our own music.

You must have been introduced to various kinds of music production in the last 27 years. For TAAQ, how has this journey been?

Pre-internet or internet era, we believe the fundamental aspect of music doesn't change very much. When it comes to us, the process is messy and organic. I write most of the song's lyrics, and the process in the jam room is fluid. After many years of making music together, you kind of trust the energy of other members. Sure, there are conflicts and disagreements. If a stranger walks into the jam room, they might feel there's some dysfunctional relation going on. But all that's in the spirit of creating what we all like. We are on album nine now. Whatever process we have, it is definitely working.

> *There's also a conscious desire to make sure we relate to our audiences. We aren't completely self-indulgent in doing exactly what we want. We also want our art to have an impact on people.There's no fight to stay relevant. The fight is only to be a better version of yourself*
>
> Bruce Lee Mani, band member

The name Thermal and a Quarter takes after the fact that there are three Malayalis and a 'quarter Malayali' in the band (Bruce). Why haven't you produced songs in Malayalam yet?

We went to a typical convent school in Bengaluru and we mostly think in English, so producing a song in Malayalam has never crossed our minds.

Musicians often stay far away from thorny subjects like religion, politics and other societal issues. However, some of your lyrics highlight them. Has that always been TAAQ's philosophy?

If you take the lyrics of our songs, they are pretty much a documentation of our lives – our life in the city, its changing landscape, etc. The lyrics are a reflection and response to what's happening around us.

Because you are an independent band, do you experience a sense of freedom to revel in the realm of creativity, to express yourself without expectation...

Bruce: Absolutely, I think you hit the nail on the head right there! We are fortunate to enjoy freedom throughout our creative journey. We've been free to do what we thought was the most relevant for us at any given point in time. If you look at the output of any artiste, eventually it is the reflection of the artiste's personality. Since we touch on the so-called 'sensitive' subjects, doesn't mean we are confrontational or an activist kind of band, but we are not afraid to be that. That's our personality. At the end of the day, it's art, and people can make what they want.

How do you stay relevant amid intense competition from other bands mushrooming across the city?

First of all, stay honest. The other aspect is not being bothered about the current trends. There's nothing wrong with following these trends, but it is essential to keep doing what comes naturally to you. Having said this, there's also a conscious desire to make sure we relate to our audiences. We aren't completely self-indulgent in doing exactly what we want. We also want our art to have an impact on people, and see our songs as a soundtrack to their lives in some way. There's no fight to stay relevant. The fight is only to be a better version of yourself.

Are there any TAAQ traditions you follow to date?

We don't have any hardcore traditions or any ritual of breaking a coconut (laughs). But we do have a motto – 'Slowly, slowly, catch the monkey.' One of our mridangam players' father used to tell him this. We kind of adopted that. It works for us. I don't think we have got the monkey yet. For us, the phrase means patience.

You've done opening acts to many names. Is there one you truly cherish?

One we did for Deep Purple. We will always remember this. It taught us a lot and made us understand that music is possible and it is a beautiful career.

A 360-DEGREE ART EXPERIENCE

JITHA KARTHIKEYAN

(The writer is an artist and curator, passionate about making art accessible to the larger public)

IMAGINE stepping into a painting and letting yourself be surrounded by its vibrant colours while blissfully drowning in its emotion. This may bear resemblance to a million childhood fantasies, but that is exactly what immersive art is all about. With the Van Gogh immersive art exhibition hitting our shores after touring since 2017, social media has witnessed an onslaught of posts of people posing with the hues of Van Gogh's dancing sunflowers and the twinkle of a starry night coming alive from another century, with 60 projectors animating his masterpieces on the walls and on the floor.

For the uninitiated, immersive art, unlike static art, envelops the viewer by creating a multisensory environment. The art is no longer two-dimensional and instead, swirls around the exhibition walls, with sound effects added. The viewer is no longer only an observer, but a participant thus establishing a personal connection with the art.

Immersive art has often been wrongly defined as something born out of technological advancements. If you envision a pair of sci-fi goggles in a virtual reality set-up on the mention of the name, you would be surprised to know that such experiential art existed from prehistoric times. It is believed that our ancestors did not merely paint on cave walls. They lit up the cave interiors with fire, creating a flickering animation effect to the bulls and the scenes they filled the surfaces with. The medieaval ages had their own forms of immersive art. Public places of worship oozed with murals and frescoes that wrapped the worshippers on all sides in religious frenzy with the divine stories it told. The Sistine Chapel, for instance, is famed for its paintings on the ceiling created by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512. The advent of technology, however, immensely changed the nature and the possibilities of immersive art. Since the 1960's, Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's art installations have invited the audience to set foot into them. Her Infinity Room installations create a kaleidoscopic environment using mirrors and lights that form shimmering patterns against the black space that is mirrored. For the artist, it is her reflection on death and the afterlife, but for the viewer, it offers the illusion of entering an infinite world. Indian artist Jitish Kallat's artwork titled, Covering Letter, which was a part of the last edition of the Kochi Biennale, presented a letter from Gandhi to Hitler, with his words being projected onto a curtain of cascading fog – a plea for peace from its greatest apostles to one of the most ruthlessly violent leaders the world has ever known. The viewers can step into the fog with these disappearing words engulfing them.

Though critics have argued that such exhibitions only feed contemporary society's obsession with the self by allowing the visitor to enter the artwork and occupy central space, the truth is that such experiences can familiarise the public that would have otherwise never stepped into a museum, with art. Immersive art can evoke strong emotions and has the potential to take us to unexplored territories if only we permit our senses and intellect to be wholly immersed in the wonder of art!

NUGGETS

MoU signed with organic dairy farmers

Akshayakalpa Organic has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with British International Investment plc (BII), the UK's development finance institution and impact investor, and Samunnati Financial Intermediation & Services Private Limited (Samunnati) to provide financing to up to 1,500 smallholder dairy farmers in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana. The partnership will see BII extend guarantees to smallholder farmers, who are typically outside the formal lending ecosystem. Chandru Iyer, British Deputy High Commissioner - Karnataka & Kerala and HM Deputy Trade Commissioner for South Asia, said: "We look forward to working with organisations that are closely working with smallholder farmers to ensure sustainable farming practices that will help to improve food security in India."

Celebrating Andhra cuisine

Check out the menu at Devaras, a new space that celebrates the cuisine of Andhra Pradesh. Savour avakai rice, where the tang of raw mango dances with fragrant spices, podi idli, miripudi dosa and wash it down with some filter coffee. The restaurant is located on Dr Rajkumar Road. For more details, call 97408 64159

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SURABHI B,** D/o of Late Daniel B born on September 16, 1997 residing at 207/4, Sree Rama Road, Thyagarajanagar 2nd Block, Bangalore - 560028 changed my name to **SURABHI B DANIEL** vide affidavit dated **February 23, 2024** sworn before Notary Hegde Ganapati Venkatraman, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **LUBNA MOHAMMED ZAFAR SAJAN**, W/o. Mr. Mohammed Zafar Sajan, D/o. Mr. Mohammed Ismail Sait, Aged about 44 years, Residing at No. 12/4, 12th Cross, Chinnappa Garden, Benglauru - 560 046, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **LUBNA BAI** to **LUBNA MOHAMMED ZAFAR SAJAN** Vide affidavit dated 23.02.2024 sworn to before P.N. Nagesha, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SHERYA.S** residing at No. 37, Nagappa Garden, Cox Town, Jeevanahalli, Frazer Town, Bangalore-560005 have changed my name to **SHREYA.S** vide affidavit dated 9-02-2024 before Notary S. Samuel Solomon, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **NASREEN TAJ**, W/o. Abdul Gaffor, Residing at No. 43, 2nd Cross, New Kaval Byrasandra Extension, RT Nagar, Bengaluru - 560 032, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **NASREEN TAJ KHALANDER KHAN** to **NASREEN TAJ** vide affidavit dated 2.2.2024 sworn to before Sumithra .N, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **NAGESH DRUESH SASALU** R/at No.3013, Halesh Industries, Edena Halli Cross, Tiputer- 572201, have changed my name to **DHRUSH SASAL** vide affidavit dated: 17/2/2024 Before Notary **B.K.R.Krishnamurthy** Bangalore.

LOST

It is Notified for the Information that my Original Certifying Statement of Marks Certificate of Class 10 (ICSE), Examination of the Year 2000-2001, **Index No.T/103/214** issued by ICSE and Original Certifying Statement of Marks Certificate of 12th Standard (ISC) Examination of the Year 2002-2003, **Index No.B/8313/053,** has been Lost. **Name of the Candidate- Mrs. VIDHI LOYALKA** Name of the School- Baldwin Girls High School, Richmond Road, Bengaluru (Class 10th-ICSE). Name of the School: Mallya Aditi International School, Yelahanka New Town, Bengaluru (Class 12th-ISC). Address: D/o, S`K Loyalka, No.539, 8th Main, 1st Cross, Koramangala, 4th Block, Bengaluru-560034.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SARALA KUMARI,** Residing at No. 120, 3rd Cross, BDS Layout, Ganesh Temple, Hegde Nagar, Bangalore North, Dr. Shivarama Karanth Nagar post, Bengaluru-560077. Have Changed My Name from **SARALA KUMARI to SARALA MOHAN** Vide affidavit dated 24th Feb 2024 Sworn before Notary & Advocate R. Chandrashekar, Bengaluru-560032.

CHANGE OF NAME

We, **(1) Mr. ANIL KUMAR MOHAN RAO** and **(2) Mrs. KAVITHA RAJENDRAN,** Presently residing at No.1404, Tower 9, Divinity, Salarpuria Sattva, Nayandahalli, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Do hereby solemnly affirm that we have changed our minor Son's name from **SAMARTH ANIL KUMAR** to **SAMARTH A JADHAV** vide affidavit dated: 24.02.2024 sworn to before Notary **Deepa M,** Bengaluru.

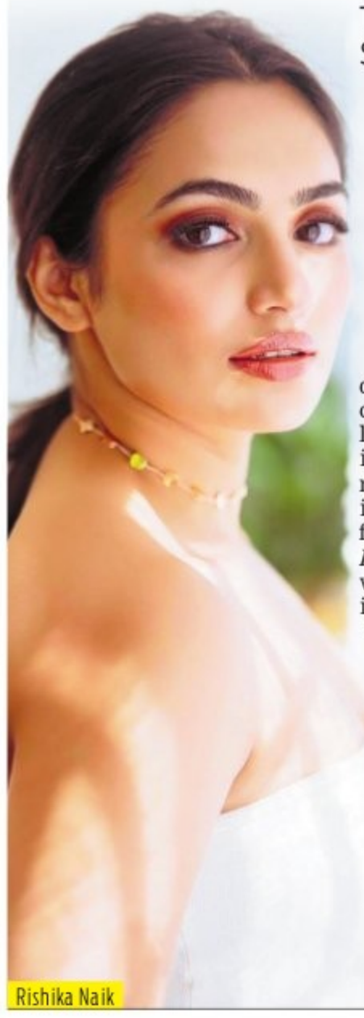
CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MOHAMMED ZAFAR SAJAN,** S/o. Mr. Noor Mohamad Sajan, Aged about 53 years, Residing at No. 12/4, 12th Cross, Chinnappa Garden, Benglauru - 560 046, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ZAFAR SAJAN** to **MOHAMMED ZAFAR SAJAN** both the names are referred to me. Vide affidavit dated 23.02.2024 sworn to before P.N. Nagesha, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

For SMART ADS & THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS CLASSIFIEDS

Contact : Mr Ravi Kumar
9886550650
080-22866893

SURAAG SAGAR TO DEBUT WITH DARK COMEDY *NIDRADEVI NEXT DOOR*



Rishika Naik

The film will feature Praveer Shetty, Shine Shetty, and Rishika Naik in lead roles

CE FEATURES

SURAAG Sagar, who honed his expertise in direction and screenwriting at Prague Film School in Europe, garnered attention with his award-winning short film, *Entropy*, a sci-fi drama. Previously serving as a creative director at Sadhu Kokila's Loop Entertainment, specialising in advertisements, corporate projects, and films, Suraag is now all set to make his feature film debut with *Nidradevi Next Door*. This dark comedy-drama, with its intriguing title, delves into subjects such as sleeplessness, trauma bonding, and the power of forgiveness.

Suraag has assembled a captivating principal cast for *Nidradevi Next Door*, featuring Praveer Shetty, who is simultaneously working on a bilingual film titled *Engagement*, currently in production. Joining the cast are *Bigg Boss Kannada* winner Shine Shetty and Rishika Naik, acclaimed for her role in Juni. The additional cast includes Sudharani, Srivatsa, Karthik Pattar, and Anurag Patil, among others. Produced by Jayaram Devasamudra under the banner of Suram Movies in collaboration with Raju Bonagaani's Rhodium Entertainment, the film boasts cinematography by Ajay Kulkarni and music by Nakul Abhyankar.

With the cast and technicians in place, the project officially goes on floors with muhurath pooja held today.

Praveer Shetty

Shine Shetty

'Kreem doesn't intend to deliver a direct message, but I hope it will create awareness'

Says Agni Sreedhar as he talks about penning the dialogue and screenplay for the film and also acting in a pivotal role in the Abhishek Basanth directorial

CE FEATURES

AGNI Sreedhar, the writer, usually known for his penchant for enthralling narratives in the underworld genre through works like *Aa Dinagalu*, *Edegarike*, and *Head Bush*, now gets on a new and uncharted journey with *Kreem*. Sreedhar pushes the boundaries of storytelling and societal exploration in the Abhishek Basanth's directorial starring Samyuktha Hegde, which is gearing up for release on March 1. In *Kreem*, he ventures into the human ritualistic sacrifices driven by the relentless pursuit of power and wealth.

Departing from his familiar turf, writer Sreedhar promises a narrative that not only captivates but also challenges societal norms and perceptions. In a conversation with *CE*, he offers insights into the inspiration behind taking up writing this novel narrative and sheds light on the relevance of such themes in contemporary society. The film produced by D K Devendra, has music by Rohit Sower, cinematography by Sunoj Velayudhan, and art direction by Shivakumar.

In addition to crafting the story, Agni Sreedhar has also penned the dialogues and screenplay and will be seen in a pivotal character called Yajaman, in the film. Sreedhar explains the relevance of *Kreem*, (a sacred word referring to Mahakali) in today's context, remarking on the persistence of ritual killings even in 2024. He explains, "Even today, people are sacrificing live animals, believing it will appease the Gods. Among these, human sacrifice is considered the most sacred, but is done discreetly due to its illegal nature."

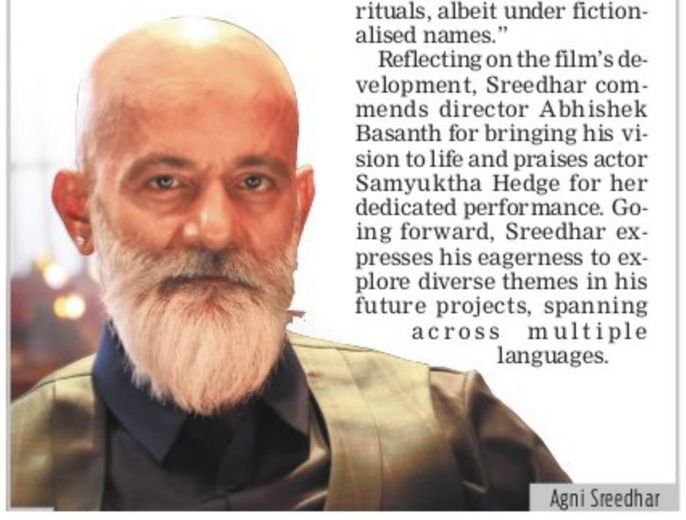
As both a writer and filmmaker, Sreedhar aims to expose the truth behind this cultural phenomenon. "Through my writing, I aim to highlight the harsh realities of our society, in which these killings often target vulnerable individuals," he asserts, adding, "*Kreem* doesn't intend to deliver a direct message, and I hope it will create awareness and prompt my viewers to reflect and retrospect."

A still from the film

Regarding his return to acting after a hiatus, Sreedhar shares, "I was persuaded by the producers' associate, Prajwal, to take on a pivotal role. Despite being occupied with various responsibilities, I couldn't refuse Prajwal's insistence." Further hinting at the complexities of his character, he suggests that audiences experience it firsthand on screen.

Drawing from his extensive knowledge of rituals and real-life incidents, Sreedhar meticulously researched the film's subject matter. He reveals, "I gathered information from victims and individuals involved in these practices, shaping the narrative and dialogues based on their accounts, shedding light on the individuals behind these rituals, albeit under fictionalised names."

Reflecting on the film's development, Sreedhar commends director Abhishek Basanth for bringing his vision to life and praises actor Samyuktha Hedge for her dedicated performance. Going forward, Sreedhar expresses his eagerness to explore diverse themes in his future projects, spanning across multiple languages.



Agni Sreedhar

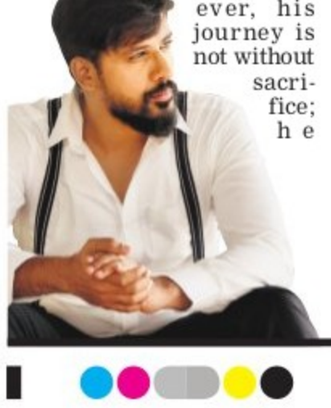
A BRAVE ATTEMPT WITH A FEW FLAWS

A SHARADHAA

ONE might wonder why Mr Natwarlal borrowed its title from the legendary Hindi film of the same name. However, the film clarifies to us that it's not just a name but is synonymous with the biggest con artist in India, Natwarlal. Many years ago, this masterful con artist became famous for his audacious schemes to swindle the Red Fort, the Parliament House, and even the Taj Mahal. Engulfed in a world of scams and schemes, Natwarlal's legacy looms large. What makes it interesting in context to this film, is the existence of a book penned by the con man himself, serving as a reference for the protagonist's journey into the art of deception. But what leads someone down this path? The film tries to unravel this mystery.

The film kicks off with a string of murders that send ACP Alok (Rajesh Nataranga) on a mission to nab the culprit. But soon, the narrative takes a sharp turn and follows a character named Ranga (Tanush Shivanna), a village lad, who flees his home due to family feuds. Accompanied by his mother (Harini Shreekanth), Ranga seeks refuge in another village, only to face another tragedy that shatters his world. With his mother and close friends gone, Ranga's life takes a drastic turn, leading him down a path he never imagined.

Amidst the swirling plot twists, Ranga emerges as an unconventional hero. With a heart of gold, he champions the cause of the underprivileged by taking from the rich and distributing to the poor. His arsenal includes disguises and a cunning online persona, allowing him to navigate his missions discreetly. However, his journey is not without sacrifice; he loses his mother and forsakes love in pursuit of his cause. As the story unfolds, the question looms: Can this modern-day Robin Hood evade justice, or will his actions catch up to him? Will his reference to the book help him understand the tactics, turning him into an expert con artist similar to the legendary Mr Natwarlal of yesteryears? the story culminates with a cold end.

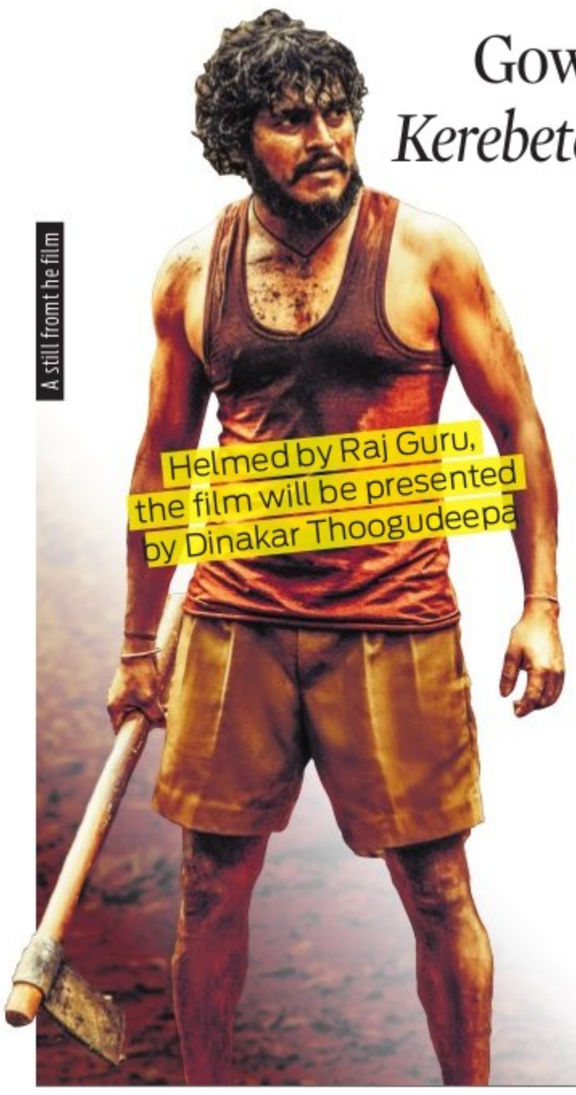


Mr NATWARLAL
Director: V Lava
Cast: Thanush Shivanna, Rajesh Nataranga, and Sonal Monteiro

RATING 2.5/5

Director Lava delivers a narrative that oscillates between Ranga's past and present, offering glimpses into his familial relationships, romantic entanglements, and unfolding investigations. However, the film's structure lacks clarity in its storytelling, particularly in the first half. It's only in the latter part that the narrative gains momentum, especially as ACP Alok ramps up his investigation, engaging various departments. As the climax nears, tension mounts, drawing the audience into the search for clues, a highlight of the film. Yet, despite its strengths, Mr *Natwarlal* is not without its flaws, leaving room for improvement in certain aspects of its execution. In conclusion, Natwarlal presents a diverse cast of characters, each adding their own flavour to the narrative. Thanush Shivanna's transformation from a village boy to a cunning con artist showcases his versatility in action, with ample room for growth in acting and dance. Sonal Monterio is seen in a candy floss heroine role, adding glam quotient to the film through song and dance. Nagabhushan's character, who plays Thanush's friend adds complexity, blurring the lines between positive and negative portrayals. Harini, along with Balraj, Yash Shetty, 'Sidlingu' Sridhar, and Sujay Shastry, contribute to the ensemble, though their roles may seem limited. However, it's Rajesh Nataranaga who steals the spotlight with his portrayal of ACP Alok, delivering an effective performance. The music by Dharmavish and the realistic cinematography by William David, complement the storyline. Yet, it's evident that not everyone can master the art of deception like the famous conman.

Gowrishankar-starrer *Kerebete* gets release date



A still fromt he film

Helmed by Raj Guru, the film will be presented by Dinakar Thoogudeepa

CE FEATURES

GOWRISHANKAR starrer *Kerebete* directed by Raj Guru has a release date. The commercial entertainer with cultural content is set to release on March 15. Along with the release date announcement the film's trailer was also launched by Gowrishankar's one-year-old daughter, Eshwari Mana. *Kerebete* is all set to be presented by Dinakar Thoogudeepa who has helmed films like *Jothe Jotheyalli* and *Sarathi*.

Set against the backdrop of the Malenadu region in Karnataka, the trailer of *Kerebete* delves into the world of a popular fishing event, capturing the rustic charm of rural life. Along with the picturesque frames we also hear the soulful musical score by Gagan Baderia. Alongside Gowri Shankar, the film also features Bindu Shivram as the female lead, and Gopalkrishna Deshpande and Sampath Maitreya in pivotal roles.

Backed by Jaishankar Patel under the banner of Janamana Cinemas, *Kerebete* marks the debut of director Raj Guru, who has previously worked with director Pawan Wadeyar in films like Googly, Ranavikrama, and Natasarvabhauma. Raj Guru, who was born and raised in Malnad, has drawn inspiration from his upbringing in the mountains and his deep-rooted connection to the game of Kerebete. The film has cinematography by Keerthan Poojary.

This cop crime drama makes for a decent watch

A SHARADHAA

PRUTHVI Ambaar, noted for his charming depictions as the lover boy in *Dia* and as the boy-next-door in films like *Dooradarshana, Juni*, or in his latest outing, *For Regn*, makes his mark as an action hero for the first time with *Matsyagandha*. In this film, the actor evolves out of his comfort zone to portray a spirited young police officer who confronts the monotony of a rather dreary workplace.

Apart from Pruthvi's acting, the other elements that immediately grab our attention at the beginning are the stunning coastal vistas, the serene melodies of the sea, and the lively ambience created by the presence of fishermen and their catch. However, the highlight of the film is Prashanth Siddi's mesmerising background score and the songs. While Prashanth is well known for his acting, he makes an impressive debut as a music composer with *Matsyagandha*.

Enter the rustic world of the Tonka police station, nestled in a sleepy rural expanse where cases are as scarce as a summer breeze. Few officers dare to serve in this forgotten corner, longing for transfers to more bustling locales. Amidst this backdrop, Param (Pruthvi Ambaar), who steps in as station-in-charge, is hungry for a breakthrough to shake off the monotony and make a name for himself.

MATYSAGANDHA
Director: Devaraj Poojary
Cast: Pruthvi Ambaar, Prashanth Siddi, Saurav Lokesh, and Sharath Lohitaswa

His aspirations seem within reach when he stumbles upon a clandestine drug smuggling operation, which ingeniously uses the local fishery as a cover. Suddenly, Param's ambitions soar, visions of quick riches and dreams of a Dubai escape dance in his mind, something that occurs to his subordinate as well. But fate has other plans as the seized drugs inexplicably vanish, leaving Param and his subordinate with a single chance to redeem themselves.

Warned by his superiors and driven by determination, Param sets out on a relentless pursuit to unmask the elusive mastermind behind the drug ring, the notorious Joint Ravi (Saurav Lokesh). In a desperate bid for assistance, Param turns to the former gangster, Michael Alexander D'Souza (Sharath Lohitashwa), whose aid comes at a price. As the stakes rise and the tension mounts, Param's quest for justice takes a turn. Will he secure the help he needs to bring down the elusive culprit, or will he find himself tangled in a web of deceit and betrayal? And even if he succeeds in dismantling the operation, will he ever recover the lost drugs? With the director dropping a hint of a sequel, the story of Param's relentless pursuit is far from over. In his lastest outing, director, Devaraj Poojary opts for a rare title and unique elements. However, in his straightforward narrative style, he doesn't play coy with the audience, opting instead to call a spade a spade. While this approach may lack the element of surprise, it ensures a refreshing honesty throughout the film. Despite the film's attractive title, *Matsyagandha*, the justification for it turns out to be surprisingly simplistic. Even the discovery of the drug in the kitchen feels like a giveaway rather than a revelation. However, despite these odd directorial choices, Devaraj excels in the way he handles every character. Each character is brought to life with a different shade, offering a refreshing departure from their usual portrayals.

RATING 3/5

Director Devaraj's decision to prioritize the cat-and-mouse dynamics within the Tonka Police Station confines Pruthvi Ambaar's character at the centre of the narrative. As Param, the tough cop navigating through a complex web of challenges and adversaries, Pruthvi exudes authority and determination, capturing the nuances of his character's journey.

The film subtly hints at Param's personal life, offering glimpses of his fiance. However, Param's unwavering dedication to his work takes precedence over his readiness for marriage.

From Pruthvi Ambaar's portrayal as a hot-headed cop to Saurav Lokesh and Sharath Lohitshwa, the ensemble cast also includes a few theatre artists, bringing their best performances. Devaraj's discerning eye for talent extends beyond the lead actors to the supporting cast like Nagaraj Byndoor, and Mime Ramadas among other actors infusing the narrative with a breath of fresh air through new faces and interesting roles.

Matsyagandha does not bank on intricate plot twists, but it relies on its well-developed characters and performances. For those eager to witness Pruthvi Ambaar's transformation and experience, Prashanth Siddhi's musical compositions amid the breathtaking coastal scenery, this film makes for a decent experience in theatres.